M.K.GANDHI

AN INDIAN PATRIOT IN SOUTH AFRICA

JOSEPH J. DOKE

PUBLICATIONS DIVISION

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PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
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ABOUT THIS BOOK

This, the first biography of Gandhiji, was written when he was in South Africa, fighting for human rights for the Indian settlers. The material contained in the book was first published in *The London Indian Chronicle* in 1909. The first Indian edition was brought out in 1919.

The author, Rev. Joseph J. Doke, came to be closely associated with Gandhiji in South Africa. Rev. Doke was a Minister of the Johannesburg Baptist Church at the time when Gandhiji launched his agitation against the South African Government in 1908. During that year, Gandhiji was the victim of a murderous assault by a fellow-Indian. The author and his wife nursed him back to health in their own home. Gandhiji has written in eloquent praise of their great humanity, their noble disposition and their tender affection. Rev. Doke and his wife later became close friends and active sympathisers of Gandhiji. Rev. Doke also edited the Indian community's journal *Indian Opinion* for a time, during the absence of Gandhiji and Mr. Polak in prison in 1911.

The author's intimate knowledge of Gandhiji's personality and his activities lends particular value and authenticity to this biography. It has been reprinted as part of a programme to publish a number of books in connection with the Gandhi Centenary, undertaken by the Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The writer of this book is not known to me personally, but there is bond of sympathy between him and me in the sentiments which we share in regard to the cause of which he is so courageous and devoted an advocate.

I commend his book to all who are willing to take my word that it is worth reading. I respectfully suggest that others who attach no value to my opinion would do well to avail themselves of the information afforded by this book in regard to the question of which few, unfortunately, in this country have any knowledge but which is nevertheless an imperial question of the highest importance.

Mr. Doke does not pretend to give more than a short biography and character sketch of Mr. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the leader of the Indian community in the Transvaal, but the importance of the book is due to the facts that men and matters are inseparably connected in all human affairs, and that the proper comprehension of political affairs in particular ever depends on a knowledge of the character and motives of those who direct them.

Although I am not in a position to criticise, I do not doubt that in these pages the facts are accurately recorded, and I have sufficient reason to believe that the appreciation is just.

The subject of the sketch, Mr. Gandhi, has been denounced in this country, even by responsible persons,

as an ordinary agitator; his acts have been misrepresented as mere vulgar defiance of the law; there have not even been wanting suggestions that his motives are those of self-interest and pecuniary profit.

A perusal of these pages ought to dispel any such notions from the mind of any fair man who has been misled into entertaining them. And with a better knowledge of the man there must come a better knowledge of the matter.

The Indian community in the Transvaal are struggling for the maintenance of a right and the removal of a degradation. Can we as Englishmen find fault with them for that? The only method of protest, except that of violence and disorder, which is open to them, who have neither votes nor representation, is that of passive resistance. Can we find fault with them for that? They are not selfishly resisting a tax or insidiously striving for new political privileges; they are merely trying to regain that which has been taken from them—the honour of their community. Let him who blames them say what he would do in similar circumstances. Is there one of us who, out of respect for the law, would submit weakly and without protest to deprivation of rights and social degradation?

The Colonial Government can remove both grievances without sacrificing an ounce of principle or losing a grain of dignity. Will the Colonial Government do so for the sake of the Empire at this moment of reconciliation, union, and new hope for the future? That is the question to which we are anxiously expecting an answer at the present moment—the question whether or not the Indians who have their homes in the Transvaal and who have assisted as a community in the development of South Africa, who are British citizens and subjects of His

Majesty the King, are to have any lot or share in the general rejoicing over the Union of South Africa.

The Colonial Government has but to repeal an act, which has served its purpose, which is now useless and unworkable, and which they themselves declare to be a dead letter, and to make a slight amendment of another act, so as to remove the explicit racial distinction imposed by these laws and in practice admit a maximum of six Indians annually to the Colony, on the old principle of right, and the question would be settled. The Indians would then have no further reason for persisting in a struggle which for them means suffering and ruin while for the Colony it means a scandal and disgrace. This does not imply that they have no further grievances. They would still labour under the disabilities imposed by the late Transvaal Republic—the incapacity to acquire the franchise and to own land, and the liability to segregation in locations.

It is not realised in this country that in the Transvaal, during the past three years, Indians have for the first time been deprived of a right which they have enjoyed, at any rate in theory, and still enjoy in every other part of the Empire, viz., the legal right of migration on the same terms as other civilised subjects of His Majesty. That is the simple but startling fact, and if this were understood, as it ought to be understood, surely there would be protest from men of all parties in both Houses of Parliament who have so solemnly expressed their disapproval and regret at the establishment of a "colour bar" under the new Constitution for South Africa. Undoubtedly this disfranchisement, under a liberal administration, of men on account of their colour, this deprivation of an elementary right of British citizenship on racial grounds, constitutes a reactionary step in

Imperial Government almost without parallel, and perhaps there never has been so great or momentous a departure from the principles on which the Empire has been built up and by which we have been wont to justify its existence, the principles of that true liberalism which has hitherto belonged to Englishmen of all parties. But the violation of the political ethics of our race is even greater in the case of the "colour bar" which has been established in the Transvaal than in that of the new South African Constitution. If the Houses of Parliament and the Press cannot see this and do not think it worthwhile to take account of so momentous a reaction, it would seem that our genius for the government of an Empire has commenced its decline.

What is to be the result in India if it should finally be proved that we cannot protect British subjects under the British Flag, and that we are powerless to abide by the pledges of our sovereign and our statesmen? Those who know about India will have no doubt as to the consequences. And what if India—irritated, mortified and humiliated—should become an unwilling and refractory partner in the great imperial concern? Surely, it would be the beginning of the end of the Empire.

These, briefly, are the reasons why this question of "the British Indians in the Transvaal" is a great imperial question and not one of mere internal administration of a self-governing Colony in which the Mother Country has neither right nor reason to interfere.

It is a matter which touches the honour of our race and affects the unity of the Empire as a whole; it therefore concerns every part of the Empire. Moreover, it is certain that any departure from principle, which may be sanctioned or ignored at the heart of the Empire, will operate as a mischievous example to other places inside

and out, and then only by some rude shock to the whole system will the arrest of moral decay be possible.

The matter therefore concerns all who would "think imperially," and it needs more "clear thinking" than it has hitherto received.

The question must be decided, not by methods of temporary expediency in which practice ignores theory, but on the fundamental principles of the ethics of our race. Theory can be modified in practice to suit the exigencies of time and place, but if theory is cast to the winds there is no means of steering practice.

There is still hope that the danger may be realised and averted, for as I write I hear that negotiations for a settlement of the British Indian question in the Transvaal are still proceeding. I have no more earnest hope than that Mr. Gandhi and his fellow countrymen may see the accomplishment of that end, for which they have struggled so bravely and sacrificed so much, before this book is published.

Milton Ernest Hall AMPTHILL
Bedford
26th August, 1909

CHAPTER II

THE BATTERIES ON THE REEF

October, 1908. This is written in Johannesburg. The Fort, used as the prison, with its great mounds of earth, originally piled up by the Dutch after the Jameson Raid, and garrisoned to overawe the city, crowns the hill above. The pleasure grounds of "The Wanderers" lie below, while between and over the lines of gum-trees which guard "The Wanderers," one can see the towers and roofs of Johannesburg. The distant scene is mellowed by a haze of smoke and the sounds of the city hardly reach so far as this. But even now the roar of the batteries along the reef, like the roar of surf breaking on a distant shore, attracts the ear. A night it comes nearer. On some cold nights when the wind blows from the mines, the sound is like the roll of thunder, as though the rocks and sands and surf were battling with each other for victory down there on "The Wanderers." That roar never ceases. On calm, hot, sunny days it almost dies; it sinks away into a lazy hum like the drone of bees in the clover. But it is always there. The batteries of the reef are never still. Night and day, and every night and every day, without rest, the crushing of the great machinery goes on, and the rocks and stones and sand yield their golden treasure in response.

This is a strange city. In many respects a wonderful city. So young, and yet so old. The problems of vice and poverty which perplex those aggregates of humanity, whose experiences cover ten centuries, are all here. A young form, and a jaded heart. Then the population is so diverse. The other day an accident

happened just in front of me, and a small crowd gathered. It was an ordinary crowd in a very ordinary street. As I reached it, a young Italian priest mounted his bicycle and rode away. A Chinese followed. The few who remained were nearly all of different nationalities. A tall Indian, probably Pathan, some Kaffirs, and two white people—one Dutch, the other a Jew. It is this cosmopolitan character of the population which forms at once the attractiveness and perplexity of the place. There is no cohesion, there is no monotony.

Problems, which are essentially problems of Johannesburg, appear on every hand—race, colour, education, crime, religion—each in turn presents its own peculiar difficulties, and clamours to be solved. Surely of all places this is the most perplexing, and perhaps the most fascinating. Few live here long without loving it. But amidst the many questions which have appeared in the city since its foundation, there is one which stands out in curious and unique relief, and has done so for a long time. That is, the Passive Resistance Movement of the Asiatics.

For some eighteen months, the Asiatic community, which numbers throughout the Transvaal about 10,000, naturally a loyal and law-abiding community, has been in revolt against the Government. The Asiatic Law Amendment Act, which was built on the theory that the Asiatics had inaugurated a widespread fraudulent traffic in "permits," and was consequently a criminal community, to be legislated against as criminals, awakened intense indignation amongst them. They clamoured for proof of this traffic, but were refused. They appealed to have the charges investigated by a judge of the Supreme Court, but the appeal was ignored. They had no parliamentary vote, and no representation in Parliament, so

nothing remained but either to give the outward sign of the criminal in registration—which was the impression of digits—or resist the Law. They decided on resistance. Fortunately, their leader was a refined, gentle, chivalrous man, a disciple of Tolstoy, and the resistance took the form of "Passive Resistance." Since then, Johannesburg has been a battle ground on which issues, which will affect the whole Empire, have been fought out, and the battle is still raging. Now, as I write, the authorities are sending numbers of Indian hawkers to imprisonment in the Fort, for carrying on their trade without a licence. Of course, they applied for a licence, and tendered their money, but because they would not register under insufferable conditions, their money was returned, and they are being prosecuted and sentenced to seven and fourteen days with hard labour in the Fort for a breach of the Law. We can see them frequently marching up the dusty road in batches—handcuffed and guarded—the passive resisters of Johannesburg.

At the beginning of the year, there were over two hundred in the gaols at one time. Since then, there have been readjustments—a compromise—a promise made and evaded by the Government—a new bill, with new insufferable conditions—and once more, that patient, dignified, persistent passive resistance, so that the number threatens again to rise as high.

Johannesburg is very apathetic about it. The "colour prejudice," which is intensely strong with a majority of the white population, makes this spot a difficult battle-ground on which to fight out such issues. Then we have so many conflicting interests—trade considerations, political interests, racial antipathies, and no one knows what besides. So Johannesburg as a whole looks with apathy on the action of the Government, and with unconcern

on the sufferings of the men—while those who pity and sympathise hardly dare speak their thoughts.

And so the batteries thunder on—political greed, injustice, racial prejudice, and the selfishness of trade; the crushing batteries of the reef, hammering and pounding under their enormous weight, the helpless Asiatic community. Sometimes the sound of it dies away to a whisper—again it rises to a roar—but it never ceases—and the result? Well, we shall see. But the leader himself has no doubt of the issue. I said yesterday to him: "My friend, it is likely to be a long struggle—England is careless, and the Government here is like iron." "It doesn't matter." he replied. "If the trial is long, my people will be purified by it, and victory is sure to come." Yes, the work of the batteries is to find the gold.

CHAPTER III

THE MAN HIMSELF

It was late in December, 1907, when I saw Mr. Gandhi for the first time. Rumour had been very busy with his name. The Passive Resistance Movement had come into prominence. Some small stir had been made in the newspapers by the imprisonment of a Pundit, and in one way or another, Mr. Gandhi's name had been bandied from lip to lip. One evening, a friend raised the Asiatic question at the supper-table, and as we were comparatively new to Johannesburg, although not new to the country, he told us what he thought of the Indians. His account was so strange and so completely opposed to all our previous experience that it made us curious, and more than anything else decided me to interview the leader.

The office, at the corner of Rissik and Anderson streets, I found to be like other offices. It was intended for work and not for show. The windows and door were adorned with the name of the occupant with the denomination of Attorney attached to it. The first room was given up to a lady-typist; the second, into which I was ushered, was the *Sanctum Sanctorum*. It was meagrely furnished and dusty. A few pictures were scattered along the walls. They were chiefly photographs of no great merit. The Indian Stretcher—Bearer Corps was in evidence—photographs of Mrs. Besant, Sir William Wilson Hunter, and Justice Ranade—several separate Indian portraits—and a beautiful picture of Jesus Christ. Some indifferent chairs, and shelves filled with law books completed the inventory.

All this I confess to have noted afterwards. Just then, my whole attention was centred in the man who greeted me, and in an effort to readjust my ideas to unexpected experiences. Having travelled in India, I had almost unconsciously selected some typical face and form as likely to confront me, probably a tall and stately figure, and a bold, masterful face, in harmony with the influence which he seemed to exert in Johannesburg. Perhaps a bearing haughty and aggressive. Instead of this, to my surprise, a small, lithe, spare figure stood before me, and a refined, earnest face looked into mine. The skin was dark, the eyes dark, but the smile which lighted up the face, and that direct fearless glance, simply took one's heart by storm. I judged him to be of some thirty-eight years of age, which proved correct. But the strain of his work showed its traces in the sprinkling of silver hair on his head. He spoke English perfectly, and was evidently a man of great culture.

Asking me to be seated, he listened to an explanation of my visit, noting the points raised with a nod of the head, and a quick "Yes," until I had done. Then he went straight to the mark. Using his fingers to emphasise his thoughts, he gave the most luminous statement of the Asiatic position, in a few crisp sentences, that I have ever heard. I was anxious to know what the religious elements in the struggle were, and he gave them with convincing clearness, explaining patiently every little involved issue, and satisfying himself that I understood each before dealing with the next. Once, when he paused longer than usual, to see whether I had grasped the thought or had only assented for the sake of courtesy, I closed my note-book, thinking he had finished. "Don't close it," he said, "the chief point is yet to come."

There was a quiet assured strength about him, a

greatness of heart, a transparent honesty, that attracted me at once to the Indian leader. We parted friends.

When I think of him now, one or two scenes stand out more vividly than others.

There is the trial in the 'B' Criminal Court, a great mass of excited Asiatics crushed in at the door, and spreading to a great crowd outside. The cynical magistrate, with his face flushed, presiding at the Bench; the horseshoe of legal offices below.

Then I can see again that spare, lithe form responding to the call, "Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi," and taking the prisoner's place with alacrity to receive a sentence of "two months' imprisonment" for the sake of his suffering people. Just prior to this, he had addressed these words to the hundreds of Asiatics who had gathered at the Mosque : "No matter what may be said, I will always repeat that it is a struggle for religious liberty. By religion, I do not mean formal religion, or customary religion, but that religion which underlines all religions, which brings us face to face with our Maker. If you cease to be men, if, on taking a deliberate vow, you break that vow, in order that you may remain in the Transvaal without physical inconvenience, you undoubtedly forsake God. To repeat again the words of the Jew of Nazareth, those who would follow God have to leave the world, and I call upon my countrymen, in this particular instance, to leave the world and cling to God, as a child clings to its mother's breast." Notable and brave words.

Another scene recurs to my mind with equal vividness. The Pathans had attacked him, striking him down and beating him with savage brutality. When he recovered consciousness, he was lying in an office nearby to which he had been carried. I saw him a moment

later. He was helpless and bleeding, the doctor was cleansing his wounds, the police officers watching and listening beside him, while he was using what little strength he had to insist that no action should be taken to punish his would-be murderers. "They thought they were doing right," he said, "and I have no desire to prosecute them." They were punished, but Mr. Gandhi took no part in it.

These are scenes one can never forget; they serve to reveal the man. Our Indian friend lives on a higher plane than most men do. His actions, like the actions of Mary of Bethany, are often counted eccentric, and not infrequently misunderstood. Those who do not know him think there is some unworthy motive behind, some Oriental "slimness," to account for such profound unworldliness. But those who know him well are ashamed of themselves in his presence.

Money, I think has no charm for him. His compatriots are angry; they say, "He will take nothing. The money we gave him when he went as our deputy to England he brought back to us again. The presents we made him in Natal, he handed over to our public funds. He is poor because he will be poor."

They wonder at him, grow angry at his strange unselfishness, and love him with the love of pride and trust. He is one of those outstanding characters with whom to talk is a liberal education, whom to know is to love.

CHAPTER IV

A COMPACT

This morning, as usual, the sanctum was full of Indians when I entered, discussing earnestly the latest phase of the Asiatic difficulty. When, however, it became clear that Mr. Gandhi and I wished for a quiet chat, with the well-bred instinct of Orientals they silently left the room. Mr. Gandhi swung round on his office-chair and faced me, his dark eyes alert and watchful, his hair a little more silvered, I thought, than yesterday, his whole attitude alert and expectant.

"My friend," I began, "I want to ask you a strange question—how far are you prepared to make a martyr of yourself for the good of the cause?" He looked a little surprised, but said quietly, "I think you should know that by this time." "No," I said, "candidly I do not." "Well," said he, his face kindling, "it is a matter with me of complete surrender. I am nothing, I am willing to die at any time, or to do anything for the cause." "Take care," I rejoined, "perhaps I shall ask something too great." "You cannot do that," he replied, calmly. Then I saw my opportunity, and drew the toils about him. "Listen," I said. "It appears to me that what we are doing now is merely tinkering at the Asiatic settlement—our fight with this Government is only part of a much greater fight, to be fought out on a larger battlefield. The question of the status of British Indians throughout the whole Empire will have to be solved, and in the settlement of that vast problem, you should have much to say. The question is—how can we best prepare for that future?" He nodded in his own quick, incisive way. I proceeded.

"You know very well that, with us Europeans, character and personality are of the first importance. It is so here, and it must be so at home. You yourself are the chief asset of the Indian cause. It is a great thing to know and trust the leader of such a movement." He was about to speak, but I stopped him. "Let me continue," I said. "Your position as leader makes your personality of great importance to the cause. It has occurred to me that if I could write a short book—bright, graphic, and reliable—making your personality real to the people of England, it might do something to help the cause in the great struggle that is to come." The emphatic nods became appreciably weaker, but they did not altogether cease, so I went on : "You will see, however, that my power to do this depends altogether upon yourself. You must tell me about your childhood and youth, allow me to picture your personality, and depict your character, and if I know anything of you, to submit to this will be the severest kind of martyrdom that you can suffer." "Ah," he said, as my purpose dawned upon him, "you have caught me completely." "But," said I, "would this help your people ?" He thought a moment, and then replied, "Yes, in England." "Well, can you go so far ?" "For the cause, I can," he said. And then, "What do you want me to do ? You don't want me to write anything, do you ?" "No," I replied, "not a word; just let me question you about that Indian city where you were born, that beautiful home of yours far away in the East, the very thoughts of your heart, your struggles and sacrifices and victories. What you cannot tell me, others will help me to discover." So, silently, with a grip of the hand, we confirmed the bond, and this is how this story was born.

CHAPTER V

THE WHITE CITY

If we begin at the beginning, we must visit, in fancy, a city in Western India, called Porbandar, and try to recall it, as it appeared a generation ago. This was the ancestral home of the Gandhis. Many changes have come since then even in slow-changing India. Porbandar has changed. The city of yesterday has gone. Its primitive customs, its haughty isolation, its serene atmosphere, have almost vanished. The city of today is not Porbandar. It occupies, of course, the old spot close to the sea. It still claims a proud position as "Capital of the Principality of Porbandar, in the sub-province of Kathiawar, in the Province of Gujarat." It still holds fifty villages in vassalage. And still its Rana Sahib is regarded as "a first-class power." But old Hindu Porbandar has gone forever.

In the days of which we write, like most towns in Kathiawar, it was surrounded by substantial walls, some twenty feet thick, and high in proportion. These have since been destroyed. The houses were built chiefly of stone quarried in the neighbourhood. The stone was white and soft—easily worked but hardening under exposure, so that, in time, these buildings became like solid blocks of marble fitted to endure an age. There was some approach also to architectural excellence, and although most of the streets were narrow, and the bazaars crowded, the effect was wonderfully picturesque. That "White City," with its massive walls seen from a distance, in the coloured glory of the setting sun, was a vision of beauty never to be forgotten. Unfortunately, there were

few trees in Porbandar. The palace and garden of the Rana Sahib were within the walls, but apart from these, the tropic loveliness of those spots

". . . Where the feathery palm-trees rise,
And the dates grow ripe under sunny skies," had no place in the scene. The only green things which were common in the city were the *tulsi*-plants, in their pots or tubs, before which *puja* was done.

Outside the walls, the sea was almost within a stone's throw. It swept around the city so closely that at times it made almost an island of Porbandar, changing the neighbouring fields into a swamp, and necessitating a bridge in later times. Beyond this, and away from the sea, the plain spread out unchecked to the distant Barda Hills.

Over this plain and on those purple hills, some forty years ago, the horrors of civil war raged. Apparently, the great convulsions which have changed the face of India—Moghul and Mahratta Wars, the victories of Clive and Hastings, the Indian Mutiny—hardly raised the temperature of Kathiawar, but internal trouble, more than once, has done so. At one time, a large portion of the people of Porbandar, the warrior caste, disowned the Rana Sahib, and civil war followed. The Prince was victorious, but traditions are still told, over the *hookah,* of the glorious stand made by two brothers who were outlaws—Maccabæan in their bravery—and of how they fought to the last, one defiantly using his gun with his feet when his hands were useless. The Gujaratis were evidently cast in another mould from that of the milder natives of Eastern India, and the experience of war has told.

The sea, too, has had its powerful influence over them. As with the Phœnicians, the Northmen, and the British,

the sea has been their nursing mother. The chief occupation of Porbandar, from remote antiquity, has been "doing business in the great waters." Vessels constructed here might be met with from Zanzibar to Aden, and the wild ocean-life gave these people an independence of character, and wide knowledge of men and things in other lands. Thirty years ago, a very large proportion of the men of Porbandar had been across the sea, either for purposes of trade, carrying their noted *ghee* or else, in the service of the State.

This is to show the stock from which the Gandhis sprang.

The Princes of Porbandar, who were knit up with the family, trace back their genealogy to Hanuman, the Monkey-God, which means that the records are ancient. What strange, fantastic, choleric characters these old Hindu Chiefs must have been ! Take, for instance, Rana Sahib Vikmatji, the Prince before whom Ootamchand and Karamchand Gandhi stood as Dewan Sahibs. Here is his picture : "Firm-minded, singularly chaste in morals, keen-sighted, often cruel, so independent that he quarrelled with the political agent, so stubborn that he raised a civil war, so niggardly that his dependents were almost starved, and yet with compensating characteristics which won their affection." A curious combination, not unusual in old India.

To be Prime Minister in the court of such a Prince was no sinecure. It meant at least occasional excitements, and a general sense of insecurity. Yet Ootamchand Gandhi, grandfather of our Mohandas, held that position for many years. Once, during the interregnum, before Vikmatji came to the throne, a romantic incident happened, which left material marks on the family inheritance. Ootamchand incurred the displeasure of the

Queen-Regent. He was displaced and fled, and the State soldiers bombarded his house. Marks of the cannon-ball can still be seen on the old mansion. Then he escaped to Junagadh, across the Barda Hills. The Nawab of Junagadh received him kindly, but the courtiers noted that Gandhi's salute was given with the left hand, an insult greater than that for which others had lost their heads. The Nawab questioned him about it. He replied, respectfully but firmly, that "in spite of all that he had suffered, he kept his right hand for Porbandar still." It is to the credit of the Nawab that he appreciated the patriotism of the disgraced Minister and maintained him honourably until the storm passed over and Gandhi was recalled.

When the grandfather died, his son Karamchand took his place, and served as Prime Minister of Porbandar for twenty-five years. Then he, too, incurred the displeasure of his sovereign—by no means a difficult task in those days—took his leave, and went to Rajkot, bequeathing to his brother his badge of office and the honours of the palace.

The Gandhi "clan" were evidently of considerable importance in the political life of Porbandar. "One of my earliest memories," said Mohandas, "is connected with the learning and repetition, as a child, of the family pedigree, with all its ramifications and offshoots, away there in the old home within the walls of the White City."

CHAPTER VI

HIS PARENTS

When Mr. Gandhi speaks of his parents, those who listen realise that they are on holy ground. It is as though some priestly Israelite had lifted the curtain of the inner shrine, to allow the Shekinah to be seen. There, in there, are the springs of Divine power and life.

"Tell me about them," I said to him, as he sat opposite me, in one of his reflecting moods. "Tell me about your parents." And this, in substance, was his reply.

There are four castes among the Hindus, each one divided and subdivided into many more :

(1) The Brahmin, or priestly caste,
(2) The Kshatriya, or warrior caste,
(3) The Vaishya, or commercial caste,
(4) The Sudra, or domestic caste.

The Gandhi clan belong to the third caste. In religion they are Vaishnavas. The father was an intensely religious man. He knew the whole of the *Bhagavad Gita,* Arnold's "Song Celestial," by heart, and according to the strictest manner of the law, he lived a Vaishnava.

The marvel was that, in the enervating atmosphere of an Indian Court, he was also incorruptible. Once, when the Thakore of Rajkot pressed him, after long service, to accept a piece of ground, urging him to take as much as he desired, he indignantly rejected the offer, thinking that it had the appearance of bribery. "What will you do with your sons ?" said the Prince, "you must provide for them. Take as much as you need." Then his relatives took up the parable, and by sheer persistence, bore down his opposition. But even then, all

that he would accept was a mere strip of ground four hundred yards long. Money had no fascination for him. Before his death, at the age of sixty-three, he had spent nearly all his substance, chiefly in charity.

Here is a vivid scene from his life. Once he fell foul of the Assistant Political Agent, who was an Englishman. In those days, the Thakore Sahib of Rajkot, whom Karamchand Gandhi was serving at the time, had no power beyond what was allowed him by the British representative, and, as a rule, a hint from such an authority was sufficient to procure the dismissal of even a Minister. Karamchand Gandhi must have been a fearless man. Hearing some insolent remark from the Englishman regarding his Prince, he dared to dispute with him. The Agent was furious and demanded an apology. When this was refused, the angry official had him immediately arrested and detained, for some hours, under a tree; the town meanwhile seething with excitement. Such a defiance of British power had never before been seen. In the end, "passive resistance" prevailed, the apology was waived, and the two opponents became friends.

The close of his life was full of sadness. When his son's marriage was approaching in Porbandar, he found it very difficult to obtain leave from Rajkot. When permission was at last granted by the Thakore, it was so near the wedding-day that the father used relays of horses between the two cities, and in the haste of travel, the cumbersome vehicle was overturned, and he sustained injuries from which he never recovered.

During the few years that succeeded, Mohandas, his youngest son, was his constant companion and nurse, and I gather that the utmost confidence must have existed between the two. But above all, it was the mother

who won the boy's unreserved devotion. His voice softens when he speaks of her, and the light of love is in his eyes. She must have been a beautiful character.

Polygamy, although not prohibited, is not common except among the Mohammedans in Porbandar. There was no polygamy and no *purdah* seclusion, in Gandhi's home. The mother was a second wife. She was very young, but remarkably clear-sighted and intelligent. She became, in fact, a political influence of no mean importance in the State, through her friendship with the Court ladies. She was not fond of jewellery, and wore comparatively little, just the usual nose rings, with bangles of ivory on her wrists and heavy anklets.

She was severely religious. Folk whispered that they had known her to fast for seven days at a time, and life was all religion with her; she made it the atmosphere of the home. She believed in stern discipline, yet withal, this mother bore such a strain of tenderness and sympathy in her heart that the children clung to her with boundless affection. If there were sickness in the home, she would sit up night after night discharging the duties of nurse. If any one nearby was in need, Brahmin or Sudra, she was the one to render help as soon as possible. Every morning the old gateway was besieged by twenty or thirty poverty-stricken people, who came to receive the alms or the cup of whey which was never refused; just as though the house were a mediæval convent, and she an Indian Saint Elizabeth. It was her influence, more than any other, that formed the character of her boy.

Here is a glimpse of the holy of holies. "When," he said, "my going as a student to London was proposed, after long refusal, my mother consented on one

condition. She had heard of the loose, immoral lives lived in that far-off city, and she trembled for her son. Taking me before a Swami of the Jain sect, she made me swear a threefold oath, to abjure the attractions of wine, of flesh, and of women." "And that oath," he added, "saved me from many a pitfall in London."

CHAPTER VII

EARLY DAYS

The home in Porbandar is a vision of after-thoughts. Some one long ago purchased the ground adjoining two temples, and then built the house on to them. You reach it now through a lane opening into the main street. The two temples, one to Krishna, the other to Rama, keep guard on either side. Then comes the open court, then a raised verandah, and finally the house itself. What it was originally no one can tell. Alterations were made by every generation. New families added to the ancestral home, and as expansion was impossible, storey was built on storey, until, when the fourth was reached, it was found that the weight of stone would mean disaster, so the last storey was built of wood. A rambling, old, weather-beaten, shot-riddled house, sacred to the after-thoughts of a long line of Gandhis.

It was here that Mohandas was born, on the 2nd of October, 1869, the youngest of the three children. On the sixth day, according to Hindu custom, a great feast was held under the auspices of Vidhata, Goddess of Fortune, and the child's name was given. The name chosen was "Mohandas."

As usual, the family astrologer was more or less responsible for this. He had consulted the signs of the Zodiac, made a reckoning with the stars, and presented to the parents the fortunate letters out of which a name might be made. The letters permitted the name of "Mohandas," so this was added to the father's name of "Karamchand," crowned with the family name of

"Gandhi," and the boy, in this way, was set up for life. Until he was seven years old he attended an elementary school in Porbandar, studying some religious book with a private teacher. Then, owing to the migration of the family to Rajkot he was transferred to a public school. From this time, although Porbandar continued to be the family home, it was seldom visited. Rajkot was five days distant by ox-wagon, or one hundred and twenty miles away, and only on special holidays, weddings, or feasts was a return possible.

Although Rajkot is not so picturesquely situated as is Porbandar, it was probably more pleasant to the eye. Certainly as an educational centre, it was preferable. It stands on the bank of the Aji river, and at that time was partly surrounded by a wall; this has since been pulled down, and avenues of trees have been planted instead, so that today it is one of the pleasantest spots in the Province of Gujarat.

Rajkot is divided into two parts representing the old and the new, the East and the West. The old part is ruled by the Thakore of Rajkot, and those born there are simply under British protection. The new town or "station" is subject to the Governor of Bombay, and is essentially British. Even the customs' regulations and the Civil Courts are as distinct as though they belonged to different countries. Old Rajkot is not so rich in buildings as is Porbandar. The white glossy plaster and white stones are missing. The houses are poor, the roofs peaked and tiled. There is more of the squalor of the Orient about it. But the "station" is beautiful. In those days, it was just emerging from obscurity, but trees were being planted, gardens beginning to show their flowers, while rich bungalows were springing into view. Notable among the buildings which then challenged

attention, was the Rajkumar College, with its splendid European appurtenances, where Prince Ranjitsinhji was already pursuing a course of study. Beyond the "station," almost as far as the eye could see, green fields spread out, dotted with villages and cattle, or giving promise of harvest. It was essentially a pastoral country.

The Gandhi's second home was in old Rajkot, close to the palace. At first they were merely guests in the town, but when Karamchand accepted the position of Dewan Sahib to the Thakore, a house was built by him, and they became settled citizens. These were school-days for Mohandas. First of all he attended the vernacular school, and continued there until his tenth year. Then he was transferred to the Kathiawar High School, whose headmaster was a Parsi graduate, where he remained until he matriculated at Ahmedabad at the age of seventeen.

"Did you ever hear of Christians and Christian doctrines in those days?" I asked him. "Not at all in Porbandar," he said, "there were no Christians there, in my time. But in Rajkot rumours of Christianity found their way into the school, and so into the home. But they were vague and by no means attractive. The Presbyterians had a Mission in Rajkot, and at one time our school was deeply stirred by the authentic report that a well-known Hindu had become a Christian. The idea among us of what becoming a Christian meant was not complimentary to Christianity. The school boys had the firm conviction that conversion meant eating meat and drinking wine."

"Had they no idea of the doctrines taught?" "None whatever. These acts, which are both abhorrent to Hindus, were for them the symbols of Christianity;

beyond this, they knew nothing. Sometimes, on our way to school, we could see a crowd near the school gate catch a glimpse of Mr. Scott preaching, or hear his voice in the distance; occasionally we heard rumours of his ill-treatment by the people, but I, at least, never went near him then. Later, I got to know him and to admire him."

At this time, all the religious teaching was received in the home, and there the *dharma* had not decayed.

CHAPTER VIII

CHANGES

At least two events worth noting marked the school-days of Mohandas. The one was his marriage, the other, a crisis in his religious life.

At the age of twelve, the boy was married. The betrothal had taken place some four years before, in the home at Porbandar, and at Porbandar, too, the marriage ceremony was carried out. Frequently, in India, the bride and bridegroom are strangers to each other until the wedding-day, and sometimes it happens, when the veil is lifted for the first time, life together begins with a shock of revulsion. In this case, however, custom was ignored. One imagines that the parents involved must have been more liberal in their views than their strict observance of Hindu ritual would suggest. At any rate, the little bride-elect was brought to Rajkot some time before the marriage, and the two children became playmates in Gandhi's home.

The wedding-day was very merry. Mohandas, his brother and a cousin were married at the same time. Numbers of relatives were present, flowers in abundance made the home gay, and as the brides and bridegrooms were but children, every part of the ceremony, from the priestly chanting of *mantra* to the game of cowrie-shells, was full of enjoyment. That was long ago. Mr. Gandhi, like most Indian reformers, is strongly opposed to child marriage. He regards it as having sapped the vital strength of his nation, and as being at the root of many other evils. But he argues that such a life-union, begun before habits and character have been formed, is capable,

if it prove happy, of reaching an ideal oneness of spirit which cannot be reached in any other way. This, probably is the issue of his own experience. Mrs. Gandhi has been a true-hearted, heroic wife. During these months of trouble she has suffered severely. It has been her affliction to be unable to share her husband's imprisonment, but she has fasted and wept until her health has broken under the strain; while she has, reluctantly but heroically, given her eldest son to be with him, and like a true and loyal Indian wife, the little bride of Porbandar has done her duty. She lives now with three of her sons, a daughter-in-law, and a grand-child, in the settlement of Phœnix. Her eldest boy, Harilal, father of the little one, is now awaiting his trial, as a passive resister, in Volksrust Gaol.

It was during these school days, while still in the fourth standard, that Mohandas reached a religious crisis, and all but lost his way. For a while he was practically an atheist. Up to that point he had worshipped the gods honestly. He had never, since the age of reasoning, imagined that the stone or wood or metal image was itself a god, but he had been told, and believed, that an act of consecration endowed the image with a Divine Spirit, and this localised spirit he worshipped. His companionship with other minds, however, almost imperceptibly changed his conception of religion. He became sceptical. A strong natural tendency to analytical study made him question the why of everything.

"I wanted to know," he said, "how this or that could be so, and why it was so," questions which brought him at length into hopeless conflict with the religious teaching of his mother. There was no alternative, so far as he knew, between idolatrous Hinduism and atheism. So atheism it was.

From this moment, other time-honoured customs, besides worship, fell also, and but for one habit which had hardened into character, and which stood the strain, the youth would probably have become a moral, as well as a spiritual, wreck. You cannot loosen the restraining influences of religion, whatever it be, without imperilling the whole being.

Mrs. Besant saw this, when, religion having become mere superstition to her, and she was bending her efforts to dislodge the hated fetish from the throne of other lives, she wrote : "It, therefore, becomes the duty of everyone to beware how he uproots sanctions of morality which he is too weak to replace, or how, before he is prepared with better ones, he removes the barriers which do yet, however poorly, to some extent check vice and repress crime."

The one habit which stood the strain in this time of "storm and stress" was truthfulness. It was then, as it is now, a part of himself. He could not lie. Other anchors were lost; this held. The little company of atheistic students, who associated together in the High School at Rajkot, and to whom Mohandas was attached, broke secretly through one Hindu custom after another, growing more and more daring. They gave up worship. They smiled at the gods. They at length began surreptitiously to eat meat. Their leader persuaded them that the strength and physique of the English were due to this indulgence. A Mohammedan friend, who, at this time began to exercise a powerful influence over them, added his persuasions. Finally, they discovered that the school master, who was venerated by them, indulged in this food, and before these successive assaults, the religious convictions of years gave way. For some time they met and discussed the awful theme, afraid of taking such an unholy course. At last they ventured, Western minds,

accustomed from childhood to this diet can never appreciate the horror and loathing with which a strict Hindu regards it. It outrages all his religious instincts. It insults his judgment. It stands as the symbol of a renunciation of Hindu faith. It is atheism.

These boys trembled while they dared. When the moment came, which should break their caste and cause a breach with all the sacred traditions of their faith, they felt like a company of murderers shocked at themselves. A party of five or six progressive spirits stole away one evening to a secluded spot by the river side, carrying meat with them, and there, under the supervision of the school-master's brother, solemnly cooked and ate it. It was eaten quickly. Mr. Gandhi says : "It tasted at first nauseous, but worst of all, the memory of it haunted the darkness of the night, and there was no sleep for the sinners." Still they persevered in their course, ashamed of being thought superstitious by others, and determined to grow strong like the English. Day after day they repeated the act, until the fear wore away, and they even began to like the forbidden food. One of their number was a pastmaster in the art of cooking. He made the dishes savoury. He invented all sorts of variations, and although the feast was enjoyed secretly, it was a feast nevertheless, and it was enjoyed.

The one anchor which held Mohandas to his old moorings, and saved him from worse transgressions, was his love of truth. Deceit was hateful to him. The expeditions to the river side had, of necessity, to be kept as a secret from his parents. The boy knew well that his terrible defection, if discovered, would be an incalculable shock to his mother. He dared not imagine its effect. But his efforts at concealment involved him in such a tangle of deceit that life became unbearable. He

and his brother, who had joined him, were obliged to obtain their mother's consent to be absent, and then to cover the real motive with ingenious inventions. They had also to excuse their lack of appetite at the evening meal. In one way or another, they found their new path to be a very devious one, not infrequently trenching closely on a lie. It was this that decided the boys to give up their companions, and resume their old manner of life. A liberty, which required deceit to make it possible, had lost its charm for them. When Mohandas was sent to England, his mother's insistence on the oath, confirmed his decision, and both parents died without ever knowing of this incident.

But the intellectual freedom of the boy was not hindered much by this return. He was a sceptic still. His mother must have been sorely puzzled, at times, by the searching questions which he put. In his difficulties, he turned to ancient Hindu lore. He studied the code of Manu, in the hope of finding some light on the riddle of life. What he found perplexed him more. It seemed to him that a much purer faith shone out from the old books than the faith which claimed his adherence in the home. The worship around him appeared childish and demoralising, it failed to retain his respect; surely there was a better way than this. So he argued, and pondered in the dark, as many a Hindu youth is doing still, until slowly the light came.

CHAPTER IX

LIFE IN LONDON (1)

After Mohandas had matriculated at Ahmedabad, he entered college at Bhavnagar, intending to graduate. On his first holiday visit to Rajkot, however, a Brahmin friend of the family, who was his spiritual adviser, turned his thoughts to another way. A resident of Rajkot had just returned from London, after having been called to the Bar. The clear-sighted Brahmin pointed to him, saying, "If you wish to make headway in your country, and become, like your father, a man of importance, you had better relinquish the idea of graduating here. You must go to London and become a barrister."

Naturally, this idea, involving, as it did, the necessity of travel, coincided entirely with the young student's desires. Adventure, sight-seeing, new circumstances, together with ambition for advancement, mingled with his dreams. He determined to go, if his mother and brother would consent. His father had died four years before. It was not difficult to persuade the brother. It seemed to him, as it did to the Brahmin, the only way of making progress. With his usual generosity, he suggested that the property which his father had left, together with the family jewels, if need be, should be sold to provide the necessary funds for this venture.

With the mother it was different. She realised, with a woman's insight, the moral and spiritual perils of such a course. Her Hindu training led her to recoil from it. Realistic tales of London life had filled her with horror. Nights were spent in prayer and days in argument, before at last she consented. But even then consent was only

given on condition that the youth should bind himself by a threefold oath of renunciation.

There remained but few things after this, to do before starting. One of these was to visit the old home at Porbandar. Mohandas had never travelled so far alone before, but recognising that now he must dare to be self-reliant, he set out on his journey. It was made partly by wagon, and partly on camelback, and Porbandar was reached in safety.

Sir F. S. A. Lely was at that time the British Administrator in Porbandar, and it was within his power to grant a scholarship to any promising Indian student, which would materially help him in London. To obtain such a scholarship was partly the object of this journey. It resulted in failure. Perhaps although Mr. Gandhi had obtained all kinds of scholarships in the schools which he attended, he did not impress the Administrator with his talent, or, possibly, some hostile influence had been at work. At any rate, the application failed. "No," said Sir Frederick, "you must graduate first—that would have meant four further years of study—then you can come to me, and I will consider it." But another part of his errand was more successful. His uncle who had followed Karamchand as Dewan Sahib of Porbandar, endorsed the scheme, gave his blessing, and sent him back to Rajkot, able at least, to realise his dream.

The news of his intended visit to England was received by a section of his friends in Porbandar with intense disapproval. Probably they belonged to the old conservative school. They overwhelmed him with abuse, told him that he would disgrace the whole clan, threatened him with condign punishment, and finally, when their abuse and threatenings proved powerless, called a meeting of caste men in Bombay and excommunicated him.

To this day, while he is welcomed in Rajkot and other towns, he is outside the caste society of Porbandar and Bombay.

Two Indian fellow-passengers landed with Mr. Gandhi at London docks on a never-to-be-forgotton September afternoon, in 1888, and not knowing where to find their friends in the great city, they decided to go to the Hotel Victoria. Their luggage was left behind for delivery, and dressed in flannels, which appeared to him a most becoming costume, the Rajkot student entered upon his English experiences. They were not at first particularly happy, and Mr. Gandhi retains vivid memories of that day. His costume and colour drew the attention of passers-by, and sensitive as he was, it appeared to him that he was a marked man. To his surprise, no one else was in flannels, his dark skin was in a hopeless minority and he began to think that courtesy and refinement were not features of London life. Beyond this he was horribly lonely. After a while, an urgent telegram brought to him an Indian friend, and matters improved. The older man was versed in city ways, and while he laughed at the young student's simplicity, he set himself, as he said, to make an "English gentleman" of him.

His first move was to take Mr. Gandhi to apartments at Richmond; then he carefully instructed him in the way he should go. This friend had accepted European customs with avidity. He ate meat, drank wine, smoked, and enjoyed company, as he imagined a gentleman should. He was himself a brilliant student, and particularly kind. Had it not been for the sacred influence of the mother he would probably have succeeded in his design. As it was, he was partly successful. Under the witchery of a false ideal, the young student wasted a lot

of time and spent a great deal of money needlessly during the first three months.

"I thought it was necessary for me to take dancing lessons," said Mr. Gandhi, "and lessons in elocution, and lessons in French, and even violin-lessons. You know I have no ear for Western music, and the result was a ludicrous failure. The violin was to cultivate the ear, it only cultivated disappointment. Still, as I thought the only way to become an English gentleman was to learn such accomplishments, I persevered even with the violin."

But there were lines of resistance in the Rajkot student which nothing could break down. He was true to his oath. Efforts to surprise him into laxity failed, plausible arguments had no weight. It was the mother's vow which gave strength to the Nazarite. When his friend knew the reason, he was furious. "An oath, you duffer!" he cried, "you had no business to come here under an oath. If you were my brother I would knock you down!" It was the food question that especially annoyed him. One night Mr. Gandhi was invited with a number of other students to a brilliant dinner-party at the Holborn Restaurant, the friend evidently imagining that modesty would forbid any questions. But he had failed to gauge the strength of the character with which he had to deal. "When the first course came," said Mr. Gandhi, laughing as he recalled the scene, "I summoned the waiter and inquired what the soup was made of. My host saw the movement, and leaned across the table to ask what it meant. When I told him, he said passionately, 'You are not fit for decent society; if you cannot act like a gentleman you had better go.' So I went."

During all this time, he was studying for the Bar at the Inner Temple. But after some months of work and

play, he saw that his ideal was a false one, that he was wasting both time and money in foolish dreams, and he determined to make a complete change. He sold his violin, gave up dancing and elocution, and altered entirely the whole course of his life. In addition to lectures at the Inner Temple, he joined a private class for the purpose of taking the London matriculation examination. He also began to live rigorously. Renting a single room and investing in a stove, he was able to keep all his expenses within £4 a month. He cooked his own breakfast and supper, which being simply porridge required no great culinary skill. Dinner he took at a vegetarian restaurant, never exceeding one shilling, sometimes making it six pence. The idea of the "English gentleman" was forgotten in the passion of the student. This life continued for about three years.

CHAPTER X

LIFE IN LONDON (2)

Until now, in religious matters, Mr. Gandhi had tried to hold his judgment in suspense. From the days of his boyish atheism, and through all the perplexities which followed, he had looked forward to the moment when he should be free from control, free from the customs of home, free to declare himself according to his conscience. Such time had now come. It brought with it, however, a sense of helplessness and ignorance which added to his perplexities. Questions pursued him relentlessly. "Did he know enough to say that nothing could be known ? After all, why should atheism be the alternative to Hindu faith ? Then there was Christianity, now become a kind of atmosphere around him—what of that ? Beyond everything, was it fair to pronounce upon Hinduism with the paltry knowledge of it which he possessed ?" Very cautiously, but very sincerely he faced these questions.

Dr. Josiah Oldfield, now in charge of the Lady Margaret's Hospital at Bromley, became his intimate friend, and exercised considerable influence over him. Other friendships, too, were formed through the Vegetarian Society, of which he became a member. It was naturally impossible yet that the question of religion should become prominent, but every discussion and every consideration of the subject only impressed him the more with his deplorable ignorance, and ignorance of that religion with which everyone expected him to be familiar. Dr. Oldfield's question, "Why not accept Christianity ?" was met by the reply, "I would not care to study Christianity without having studied my own religion first."

The Doctor wisely acquiesced in this idea, but lost no opportunity of acquainting him with the life of Christ.

He was also brought into touch with the Theosophists, saw Madame Blavatsky, read her book *The Key to Theosophy*, and attended the "Blavatsky Lodge," but beyond quickening his interest in religious problems, Theosophy failed to enlighten him. Two brothers, however, who were Theosophists, indirectly did him good service. Being deeply interested in Indian lore, they expressed a wish to read with him the *Bhagavad Gita* and willing to please them, he assented. When he commenced, he was ashamed to find that, although he was familiar with the Sanskrit language and had frequently read the poem as a lesson, he was utterly unable to explain its subtle meanings. He determined to study the book for himself. Naturally, he came to the task with a profound veneration for the song which his father had loved, but his veneration was quickly supplemented by surprise and delight, as he pondered it for himself. The fascinating beauty of the song enthralled him. The circumstances in which he read it, far from his own land and among strangers, deepened the effect. It was like the discovery of a precious jewel which had long been his, though unrecognised. "The *Gita* opened to me," he said, "a new view of life. It touched my spirit as perhaps it can only touch a child of the East; I had found at last, as I believed, the light I needed." This was an epoch in his life.

About the same time, a gentleman from Manchester met him, and, becoming interested in Mr. Gandhi's religious views, attempted to combat what he believed to be false in them, and to bring him over to the Christian faith. This friend was so evidently sincere that when he said : "For my sake, promise, at least, to read our Bible, and

let me get you one." Mr. Gandhi promised. Unfortunately, the gentleman failed to indicate what parts of the Bible he should read. So the student began at the beginning, and stumbled through whole chapters which bore no relation to his own needs, nor to the cry of his heart, until the task became insufferable. Again and again he asked himself, "What could have led this friend to exact such a promise ?" It all seemed so completely beside the mark. When Exodus was finished, he simply closed the book and, for a time, closed with it his researches in the literature of Christianity. Still he was eager to receive any fresh light. He not only maintained as far as possible an open mind, but he endeavoured to place himself where truth might be found.

He even accustomed himself to attend the churches. On one occasion he heard C. H. Spurgeon. He also listened to Archdeacon Farrar, but neither of these preachers impressed him. He was unable to start from their premises, or follow their line of thought, and he left their churches without grasping their message. With Dr. Parker it was different. His Thursday mid-day talks at the City Temple appear to have attracted the student. "It was his appeal to the thoughts of young men that laid hold of me," said Mr. Gandhi, "and I went again and again." On the whole, although no final goal was reached, these different influences helped to quicken and mature his thought, and, at any rate, to sweep away the fragments of his boyish atheism. God had become a reality.

Mr. Gandhi passed his examination with credit, but with no particular distinction, and at the end of his three years was called to the Bar. Immediately afterwards he returned home.

"What idea did you form of English life ?" I asked him. "Did it impress you favourably ?" "Yes," he

replied, with emphasis, "even now, next to India, I would rather live in London than in any other place in the world."

CHAPTER XI

DISILLUSIONED

The arrival home was shadowed by a great sorrow. Mr. Gandhi discovered that his mother was dead. His friends, wishing to spare him, had not told him of this before he left England; and even on landing, but for his determination to go at once to Rajkot, they would have still preserved silence. The news was a great shock when it came. His mother, with her stern principles and unwavering adherence to the old way, would doubtless have felt the subtle, inexplicable change in her son. But the tie between them was too close and tender to have been disturbed. As it was, Rajkot was shorn of its chief charm, and the home-coming was a painful one.

It had been the elder brother's intention to get the young barrister away to a quiet spot, for the process of ceremonial cleansing according to custom, before his appearance in Rajkot. Probably this influenced his silence regarding the mother's death. Now the cleansing must follow. It was a purely ceremonial observance, and so far as Mr. Gandhi was concerned had no religious significance. It was simply the prescribed way of readmission to caste society and caste privileges. Nasak, in the Western Ghats, was chosen as the sacred spot. The returned prodigal was bathed, a priest chanted *mantra* and when the ceremony, involving an expenditure of about Rs. 50, was complete, a caste dinner was held, and without any reference being made to the subject which occasioned it, he was admitted and welcomed as one of the company.

The practice of the law, in Rajkot, and the study of

the law in the High Court of Bombay, together with a more systematic research into the old Hindu faith under a learned Jain, occupied Mr. Gandhi for some eighteen months. Then an invitation came, through his brother, to go to South Africa. A firm in Porbandar, with a branch in Pretoria, offered him a twelve months' engagement to undertake an important law-suit, in which a number of Indians were involved. The offer was accepted, and this is how, in 1893, Mr. Gandhi made his first acquaintance with South Africa. It was not altogether happy, but it accurately foreshadowed what has been his experience ever since.

His first day in Natal disillusioned him. He said, "I have made a mistake in coming. My clients have misled me." The country was beautiful. The weaving banana leaves, the vast field of sugarcane, the date-bushes springing from a tangle of tropical growth, reminded him of his native land. The while English faces suggested pleasant reminiscences of the little Island across the sea. It would be difficult to imagine a more lovely spot than Durban, or more hospitable people than its citizens. But, apparently, there was no welcome for an Indian. Evidences of a radical difference of treatment between white and coloured people startled the new arrival and cut him to the quick.

He himself was a high-caste Hindu, the child of an ancient and noble race. His father, grandfather, and uncle had been Prime Ministers of their respective Courts. His childhood and youth had been spent in India, familiar with all the splendour of an Eastern place. In manhood he had known nothing of colour-prejudice, but had been granted free access to polite English society. Prince Ranjitsinhji was his friend. By profession he was a Barrister, trained in the fine old

English Law Schools of the Inner Temple, and called to the Bar in London—a cultured gentleman in every sense of the term. Hitherto he had looked upon a white face as the face of a friend. He had been taught from childhood to admire the justice of British law and the purity of British honour. It is true that, now and then, some British official had shown himself brusque or over-bearing, but nothing, so far, had happened to chill his loyalty.

Here in Natal, it was all changed. When, on the day following his advent, according to Eastern habits of respect, he wore his barrister's turban in Court, sitting beside his client's solicitor at the horse-shoe, and was rudely ordered to remove his hat, he left the building smarting under a sense of insult. It was a feeling frequently to be aroused.

The case for which he was engaged needed his presence in Pretoria. The train could only take him as far as Charlestown. His clients had advised him to take bed-ticket for the journey. This he neglected to do, having his own rugs with him. At Pietermaritzburg, before starting, a fellow-passenger called the guard, and to his surprise, Mr. Gandhi was ordered to "come out and go into the van-compartment." As he held a first class ticket, and knew that the carriage went through to Charlestown, he refused. The guard insisted. The train was ready to start. He refused again. A constable was brought, and the Indian stranger was forcibly ejected, his bundles pitched out after him, and, with the train gone, he was left to shiver in the waiting-room all night.

When at length he reached the Transvaal, and began his coach-journey, he again felt the disadvantage of being an Indian. The coach was about to leave Paardeberg with Mr. Gandhi seated on the box when the

guard, a big Dutchman, wishing to smoke, laid claim to this place, telling the Indian passenger to sit down at his feet. "No," said Mr. Gandhi, quietly, "I shall not do so." The result was a brutal blow in the face. The victim held on to the rail, when another blow nearly knocked him down. Then the passengers interfered, much to the guard's disgust. "Let the poor beggar alone," they said, and the man threatening to "do for him" at the next stage desisted. But at Standerton the coach was changed, and the rest of the journey was accomplished without incident.

It is almost amusing now, to anyone acquainted with colonial prejudice, if it were not so pitiful, to note how utterly ignorant the new-comer was of it all. He even drove to the Grand National Hotel on reaching Johannesburg, where, of course, there was "no room" for him. Everywhere it was the same. The colour-bar was a terrible disadvantage, and experiences like these so disheartened and disgusted him, that, but for his contract with the Indians, he would have left South Africa at once.

As it was, the contract held him, and the twelve months spent in Pretoria were a distinct gain. He learned self-restraint. Even when the sentry kicked him off the foot-path in front of President Kruger's house, and his European friends wished to test the legality of the act, he refused to retaliate. He learned to bear the insults which attached to his race and colour, until for the sake of his people, he almost gloried in them, and, gradually, pride of birth and education gave way before the humility of sacrifice.

During this period, Mr. Gandhi attended Bible classes conducted by a prominent solicitor in Pretoria, and studied the characters of Christian people, with a

keenness of vision which they seldom suspected. Having plenty of time, he read widely, "quite eighty" books within this year; among them, Bulter's *Analogy*, Tolstoy's work, *The Six Systems*, by a Jain philosopher, and a great deal of Dr. Parker's *Commentaries*. He also read the whole Bible for the first time. When, in his constructive study, he reached the "Sermon on the Mount," he began to realise the full charm of Scriptures. "Surely," he said, "there is no distinction between Hinduism, as represented in the *Bhagavad Gita*, and this revelation of Christ; both must be from the same source."

In order to clear his thought or confirm his conviction, Mr. Gandhi consulted his friend Dr. Oldfield, and a learned Jain teacher in Bombay. He also corresponded on the subject with Edward Maitland, an exponent of Esoteric Christianity. Mrs. Anna Kingsford's book entitled *The Perfect Way* had greatly impressed him. He was slowly feeling his way to some definite religious faith. Not least among the formative influences of that year was a visit to the Wellington Convention, and his contact with Dr. Andrew Murray, the veteran Dutch Reformed Minister, Mr. Spencer Walton and other leaders of the Keswick School. Speaking with appreciation of this experience, he said, with an amused smile: "These people loved me so well, that if it would have influenced me to become a Christian, they would have become vegetarians themselves!" So this memorable year passed.

CHAPTER XII

THE AWAKENING OF NATAL

At the close of 1893, Mr. Gandhi was again in Durban, intending to leave speedily for India, but, at a social gathering given by his clients, he saw the "Natal Mercury," and discovered that the Government was about to introduce a bill to disfranchise Indians. He also saw, from various comments in the paper, that this was to be the precursor of other disabling bills. He brought this at once to the notice of his compatriots, and urged them to take concerted action, pointing out that, if protests were not at once made and the effort opposed, nothing could prevent their ultimate extinction. The Indians were startled, but said they knew nothing about it. Mr. Gandhi offered to draw up a petition against the bill, if they would, on their part, obtain signatures. They agreed, and that evening a beginning was made. It was the commencement of that long battle with race-prejudice and injustice, which is still unfinished, and to which Mr. Gandhi has devoted his life.

The sudden awakening of the Indians was so novel that it aroused keen interest in Natal. The petition, which was largely signed, the telegrams to Government requesting a delay of proceedings, the deputation to Members of Parliament in Pietermaritzburg, all marked a new self-consciousness in the hitherto apathetic Indian community, which even the Government could not note without concern. It failed to defeat the bill, but taught the Indians that they were not ciphers, and it taught the Europeans that a new force had been born into Colonial life. The bill passed, Sir John Robinson, who was then

Prime Minister, making several useful admissions, while the petition was sympathetically reviewed by the Natal Press. This was much. To the leader himself it was a glorious beginning, the prophecy of a harvest of rich fruits. With the sympathies of a cultured Indian, coupled with the instinct of an exceptional mind, Mr. Gandhi held that it needed but an awakening of such a nature to uplift his people from the servile condition to which they appeared to have sunk. The system of indentured labour, which imported Indians to work in the sugar fields, meant a system of servitude little better than slavery. Even the free Indian felt the degrading effects. Save in some outstanding cases, there were no high principles, no great ambitions, no consciousness of manhood, among them with which to oppose the ever-encroaching oppression of Colonial laws. They were content to live, and to live as slaves. It was this apathy which appalled him. He saw of what they were capable, and realised to what they were drifting, and determined to resist with all his might the elements, both within his community and without, which were making for degradation. It was like a new adventure in the valley of St. John, with the old curse on the lovely maiden :

"And this weird shall overtake thee,
Sleep until a Knight shall wake thee."

The awakening had at length come; and through the whole Indian community a new thrill of self-consciousness had answered his touch. It was his endeavour now to foster and encourage this national uplift.

Mr. Gandhi advised that his people should send a widely signed petition to the Imperial Colonial Secretary. This was done; ten thousand signatures were very quickly secured, and forwarded to Lord Ripon. The

bill failed to receive the royal sanction and was withdrawn. It was withdrawn, however, in favour of another bill shortly afterwards introduced, which reached the same goal by a different route. The Indians of Natal were disfranchised.

Mr. Gandhi meanwhile proposed the formation of a permanent organisation to watch the interests of the Indians, and prevent a surprise in future. His friends replied that the idea was excellent, but impracticable unless he consented to remain. He said it was impossible, as he would not accept pecuniary assistance for such work, and if he settled in South Africa, he could see no way of supporting himself and maintaining fitly his position as a barrister. The Indians then offered to guarantee him a practice. It seemed to them, now that they were awakened to the seriousness of their condition, that it was essential that they should have someone to act for them, who was qualified to interpret the thoughts of the two nations, and give an acceptable form to their own desires. So they pressed their claim. Feeling the force of their arguments, Mr. Gandhi, although he would gladly have closed his eyes to them and returned to India, at last consented to remain. So South Africa became the land of his adoption, and under his hand the Natal Indian Congress and the Natal Indian Educational Association were formed.

It was difficult, however, for him to obtain admission to the Supreme Court. The application was strenuously opposed by the Natal Law Society on the specific ground of colour. "It was never contemplated," so they argued, "that coloured barristers should be placed on the roll." To the credit of Natal, the Supreme Court laughed at this objection, and Mr. Gandhi was admitted. Then followed two years of hard work, practising, organising,

educating, with all the force and energy of his enthusiastic nature; and in 1896 he visited India once more, with the object of bringing back his wife and children.

CHAPTER XIII

A STORMY EXPERIENCE

Before Mr. Gandhi left Natal, he wrote and published a pamphlet, entitled *An Open Letter,* wherein he set forth clearly and strongly the disabilities under which the Indian community were suffering. This he enlarged on reaching India using it as a basis of a lecture, which he reprinted and circulated on a large scale.

His arrival in his own country was the signal for a great demonstration of popular sympathy. Meetings were held in Bombay, Madras and Poona, at which he was invited to speak. Before me lie printed accounts of these meetings and the verbatim records of what he said. Evidently the impression was deep and wide.

Mr. Gandhi is not an impassioned speaker. His speech is calm and slow, appealing chiefly to the intellect. But with this quiet way, he has the gift of placing a subject in the clearest light, simply, and with great force. The tones of his voice, which are not greatly varied, bear the note of sincerity, and his quick and keen intellect seizes on points which matter, and presents them with an emphasis that carries conviction. I have listened to him often, watching the faces of his audience, and while I should not call him an orator, and certainly have met with several of his countrymen whose elocution, natural and unaffected, is far superior to his, I have never met with a more convincing speaker than he. In Gujarati he naturally speaks with greater rapidity than in English, but with even less variation of voice. He never waves his arms, seldom moves a finger, but the force of his own conviction, his modesty, and his logic carries his

hearers with him. Few can withstand the charm of his personality. I have known his bitterest opponents silenced and made courteous by the power of his own courtesy. The impression that he leaves with all who debate with him is one of invariable and beautiful courtesy. They recognise that they have met a gentleman.

These qualities must have told greatly in India, and the reports of his meetings indicate that all classes of people were deeply moved. The sense of the wrongs under which British Indians were suffering in South Africa stirred them with intense feeling, as it does yet more today. Unfortunately, while the interest was at its height, Reuter cabled to England a highly coloured summary of Mr. Gandhi's address. This was the message sent: "September 14. A pamphlet published in India declares that the Indians in Natal are robbed and assaulted, and treated like beasts, and are unable to obtain redress. The *Times of India* advocates an enquiry into these allegations." There was some truth in this summary, but it was not all the truth, and

"A lie which is half the truth is ever the blackest of lies."

Reuter had generalised from statements of particular cases. Isolated instances mentioned by Mr. Gandhi had been made to appear as the common lot of Indians in Natal, and the speaker, a rabid agitator, who was a menace to the Empire. I have the address before me as it was circulated in great numbers in India, and fail to find the note of the "irresponsible agitator" in it. Its language is clear, forcible and calm, while every statement can be borne out. If facts about Colonies may not be told in India without awakening shame and anger, it is time indeed that those facts should be changed. The Colony was to blame for burdening Mr. Gandhi with such a story.

When the cablegram was transmitted to South Africa, naturally Natal was up in arms. Indignation meetings were held, and Mr. Gandhi was denounced in very forcible, if not very refined, terms. He was charged with besmirching the good name of the Colony that had entertained him. These are the actual words, as they were uttered by a prominent doctor and colonist, before a large gathering of citizens in Durban, and published in the *Natal Advertiser*. They form a good example of what was being said everywhere :

"Mr. Gandhi," he affirmed, "had accused the Colonists of Natal of having dealt unfairly with Indians, and of having abused and robbed and swindled them (a voice: 'You can't swindle a coolie'). He (the Doctor) quite agreed with that. Mr. Gandhi had returned to India and dragged them in the gutter, and painted them as black and filthy as his own skin." (Applause.) Evidently feeling was at white heat.

In the midst of his work, while Mr. Gandhi was arranging a meeting in Calcutta, he received a cablegram from Natal asking him to return at once, as Parliament was about to sit. This was in November, 1896. He returned to Bombay immediately, booked his passage by the first available steamer, and with his wife and children, embarked on the *S. S. Courland* for South Africa. The *Courtland* left Bombay on the 28th of that month. The *S. S. Naderi* sailed two days later. They carried Indian passengers, and reached Durban together. Then the battle began.

The two vessels were at once quarantined and detained by the health officer for beyond the usual time-limit, although there was no disease on board, and no reason assigned for the delay. Only after repeated appeals by agents and by captains, not only to the regular

authority, but to the Government, was pratique granted. Meanwhile, arrangements were being matured in Durban, and a demonstration organised, with the avowed object of preventing the Indians from landing. The following notice appeared in the *Natal Advertiser* on the 30th December, above the signature of "Harry Sparks, chairman of a preliminary meeting," one of Her Majesty's commissioned officers : "Wanted, every man in Durban to attend a meeting to be held in the large room at the Victoria Cafe, on Monday, 4th January, at 8 o'clock for the purpose of arranging a demonstration to proceed to the Point and protest against the landing of the Asiatics." About 2,000 people attended and the meeting was eventually held in the Durban Town Hall. Its temper may be gauged by the resolutions passed.

(1) "That this meeting is strongly of opinion that the time has come to prevent the landing of any more free Indians or Asiatics in this Colony, and now calls upon the Government to take steps to have returned to India at the Colony's expense the Asiatics at present on board the *Naderi* and *Courland*, and to prevent any other free Indians or Associates being landed in Durban."

(2) "Every man at this meeting agrees and binds himself with a view of assisting the Government to carry out the foregoing resolution to do all his country may require of him, and with that in view will, if necessary, attend at the Point any time when required."

The speeches in support of these resolutions made it clear that Mr. Gandhi was the supreme object of reprobation and that the assembled citizens were quite prepared to adopt force to accomplish their object.

The Government, according to a statement made by the Hon. Harry Escombe, then Attorney-General of Natal, were quite with the demonstrators, but were ham-

pered by legal difficulties. At a second meeting, on the 7th January, Dr. Mackenzie reported that, in a conference with the Prime Minister that morning, Mr. Escombe had said that "the Government were with them and wished to expedite the matter in every possible way." Dr. Mackenzie continued: "Some gentleman said, 'Extend the quarantine'; that was exactly what Parliament was going to do. (Applause and cries of 'Sink the ship.') I heard a naval volunteer say last night that he would give a month's pay for a shot at the ship; was every man present prepared to pay down a month's pay to carry out the object of the meeting? (Applause and cries of assent.) Then the Government would know what they had behind them."

Preparations were then carried forward and full arrangements made, including lists of men who were willing to use force, and the appointment of "captains" to lead them. Durban was in a ferment of excitement. The terrified resident Indians expected an outbreak of mob-violence at any moment. It is difficult today to tell how much of this extreme hostility and show of force was due to a real determination on the part of the leaders to carry through their proposition and how much was simply intended as a means to induce the Indians to beat a cowardly retreat. It is quite certain that everything was done to make the passengers aboard the two ships aware of the feeling on shore and to make it clear to Mr. Gandhi especially that he would have a warm reception should he land. Probably, the demonstration was mainly "buff," but when a spirit of mob-violence has been evoked, it is not, as a rule, easily controlled. Mr. Gandhi and his fellow-passengers, however, had no thought of retreat. The Colonists might do what they pleased, but legally they dared not refuse the landing, and there was one at least on board who knew that.

During the whole of this time the ships had been detained in quarantine, and letters and appeals remained unanswered. On the 12th January, the ship-owners wrote to Mr. Escombe: "The steamers have now been at the outer anchorage for 24 days, at a cost of £ 150 per diem to us; so we trust you will see the reasonableness of your giving us full answer by noon tomorrow, and we think it right to inform you that, failing a definite reply giving us an assurance that we shall be paid £ 150, from Sunday last, and that you are taking steps to suppress the rioters so as to enable us to disembark the steamers, preparations will be at once commenced to steam into harbour, relying on the protection which, we respectfully submit, Government is bound to give us." This quickly drew a reply. Mr. Escombe wrote as follows at 10.45 the following morning: "The Port Captain has instructed that steamers shall be ready to cross the bar inwards at 12 o'clock today. The Government needs no reminder of its responsibility for the maintenance of order."

So far, threats of violence had failed to scare away the Indians. A letter sent by "Harry Sparks" to the Master of the *Courland,* describing the dangerous temper of Durban, urging the passengers to return to their native land, and promising that the Colony would pay their expenses, had also failed of its design. Mr. Gandhi had interpreted the letter to them all, and had told them what they might expect. He explained also to them that, in his opinion, duty demanded that they should persevere, and they resolved to accept his guidance. A laconic message was returned: "The passengers decline to go back."

"When", said the *Natal Advertiser,* on January 16th, "the signal was received that the *Courland* and

Naderi were daring to come into Port, and the trumpeters galloped through the streets and borough shortly after 10 o'clock on Wednesday morning, the general impression was that the poor Indians were in for a rough time if they attempted to land, and that even if they remained on board, afraid to disembark, they would be deafened and scared into hysterics by the hooting, groaning and jeering of the assembly; but the end was to be the same as originally intended—no landing at any price." The same journal gave a graphic account of what actually happened.

"Shortly before 12 o'clock the muster on Alexandra Square was completed, and as far as could be ascertained, the sections were as follows (numbers of names are here given of those who were appointed to lead; most of them are but names now and may well be forgotten) :—Railway men, 900 to 1,000. Yachi Club, Point Club and Rowing Club, 150. Carpenters and Joiners, 450. Printers, 80. Shop assistants, about 400. Tailors and Saddlers, 70. Plasterers and Bricklayers, 200. General public, about 1,000." So that it was estimated that over 3,300 were gathered to oppose the landing by force. These were all carefully marshalled and well-captained. The native section amounted to 500. These were amused and kept in order on the Square during the demonstration, a dwarf having been appointed as their leader. The journal continues : "Great uncertainty was felt on board the vessels as to what form the demonstration would assume. Captain Milne of the *Courland,* who exhibited the bolder attitude of the two, was allowed to have his vessel taken in first, although she lay further up the coast than the *Naderi.* He decided that some effort should be made to protect the passengers, as he had received no assurance from the Government that any steps had been

taken to do so. He therefore had the Union Jack run up at the forecastle head, the red ensign was placed above the ship's house-flag at the mainmast, and the red ensign was also exhibited at the stern. His instructions to his officers were to prevent any demonstrator from coming aboard if possible, but if they did come aboard, to haul down the Union Jack and present it to the invaders, his idea being that no Englishman would seek to molest those on board after this surrender. Fortunately, as matters resulted, it was not necessary to have recourse to this action. As the *Courland* entered the bay, all eyes were on the look-out to see what form the demonstration was taking. A row of people, extending from the south end of the main wharf to some distance along the north pier, could be perceived, but they seemed to take matters very calmly. The Indians on board did not seem much scared, and Mr. Gandhi and a few others who were on deck looked on with an unperturbed expression. The main body of the demonstrators, who had thronged the vessels at the main wharf, could not be seen from the incoming steamers. The surprise experienced by those on the embankment when they saw the *Courland* laid alongside the Bluff Channel mooring was seen by their actions. They were seen to rush hither and thither, entirely at a loss how to proceed, and soon they all left to attend the meeting on Alexandra Square. This was the last that the vessels were to see of the much talked of demonstration. Meanwhile, Mr. Escombe was pulled alongside of *Courland* in a rowing-boat, which was also occupied by Captain Ballard, Port Captain, Mr. Reid, Wharf-Master and Mr. Simpkins, Mooring-Master. The Attorney-General said : 'Captain Milne, I want you to inform your passengers that they are as safe under the Natal Government laws, as if they were in their own

native villages.' The Captain asked if it was advisable for him to allow them to land. Mr. Escombe replied that he (the Captain) had better see him again first. Having made a similar communication to the *Naderi,* Mr. Escombe pulled ashore to address the crowd. The *Naderi* and *Courland* were laid side by side near to the Bluff passenger's jetty, the *Courland* being nearest to land."

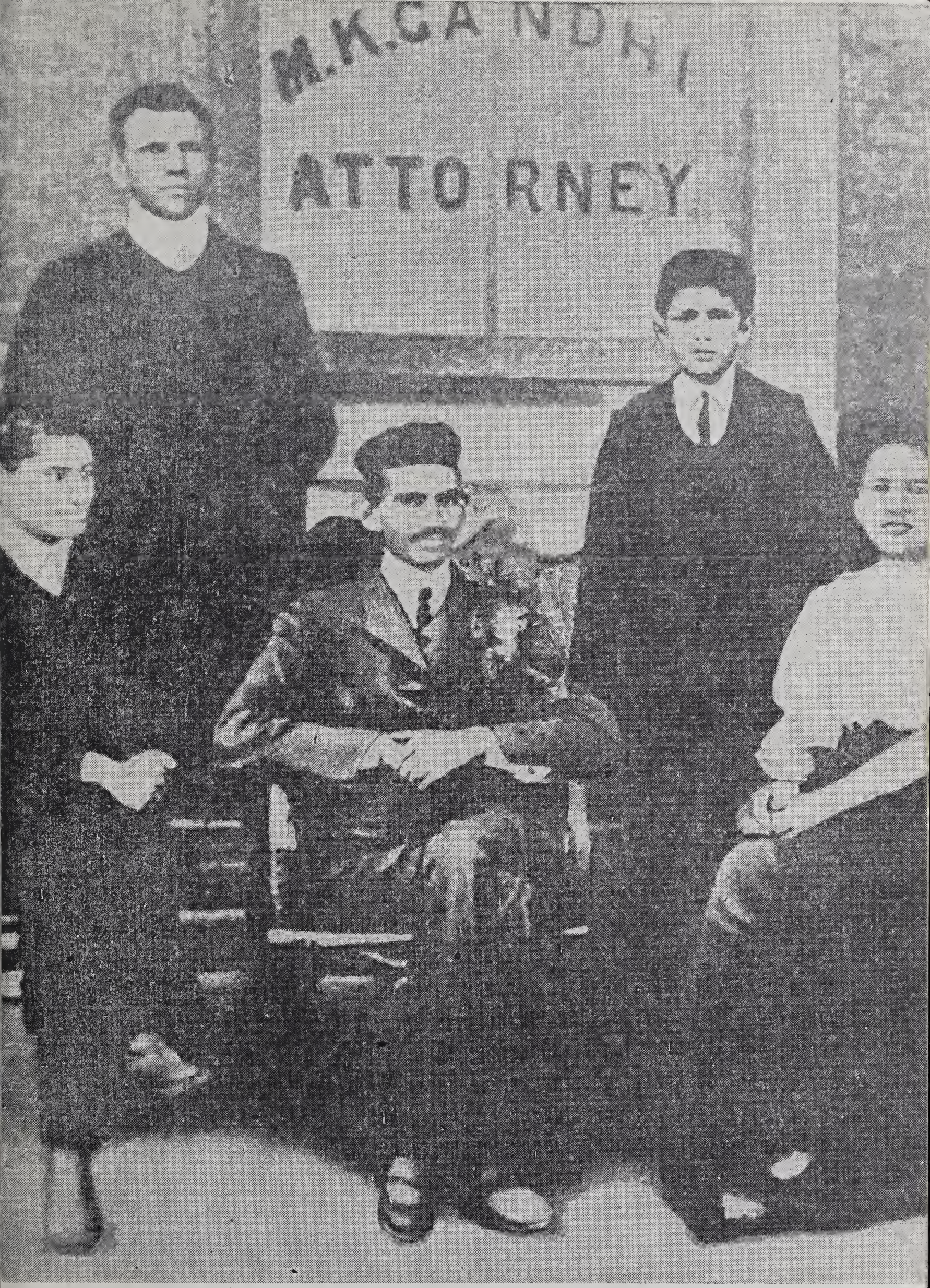
Now that the scare had failed, it was Mr. Escombe's policy to try and disperse the crowd. So he addressed them with his most honeyed eloquence and persuaded them that they had done all that was needful. He promised that an early session of Parliament should deal with the matter. Then he commanded them, in the name of the Queen, to disperse. After a few other speeches had been made, the command was effective, and the great Demonstration melted away.

Two hours later, the passengers landed in ferry-boats. A message, however, reached Mr. Gandhi from Mr. Escombe, advising him not to land with the others, but to wait until evening, when the Superintendent of the Water Police would take him ashore. This advice he was willing to accept. But shortly afterwards, Mr. Laughton, of the firm of Messrs Goodricke, Laughton and Cook, Solicitors, came on board and proposed that Mr. Gandhi should go ashore with him. They consulted the Captain and accepting the sole responsibility of the act, decided to face the shore at once. Mrs. Gandhi and the children were sent separately, and reached their destination safely. But as soon as Mr. Gandhi was seen on the boat, he was recognised by some boys, and the alarm given. Mrs. Gandhi and the children had been taken to the house of Mr. Parsee Rustomjee, a wealthy Indian friend. It was arranged that Mr. Gandhi should

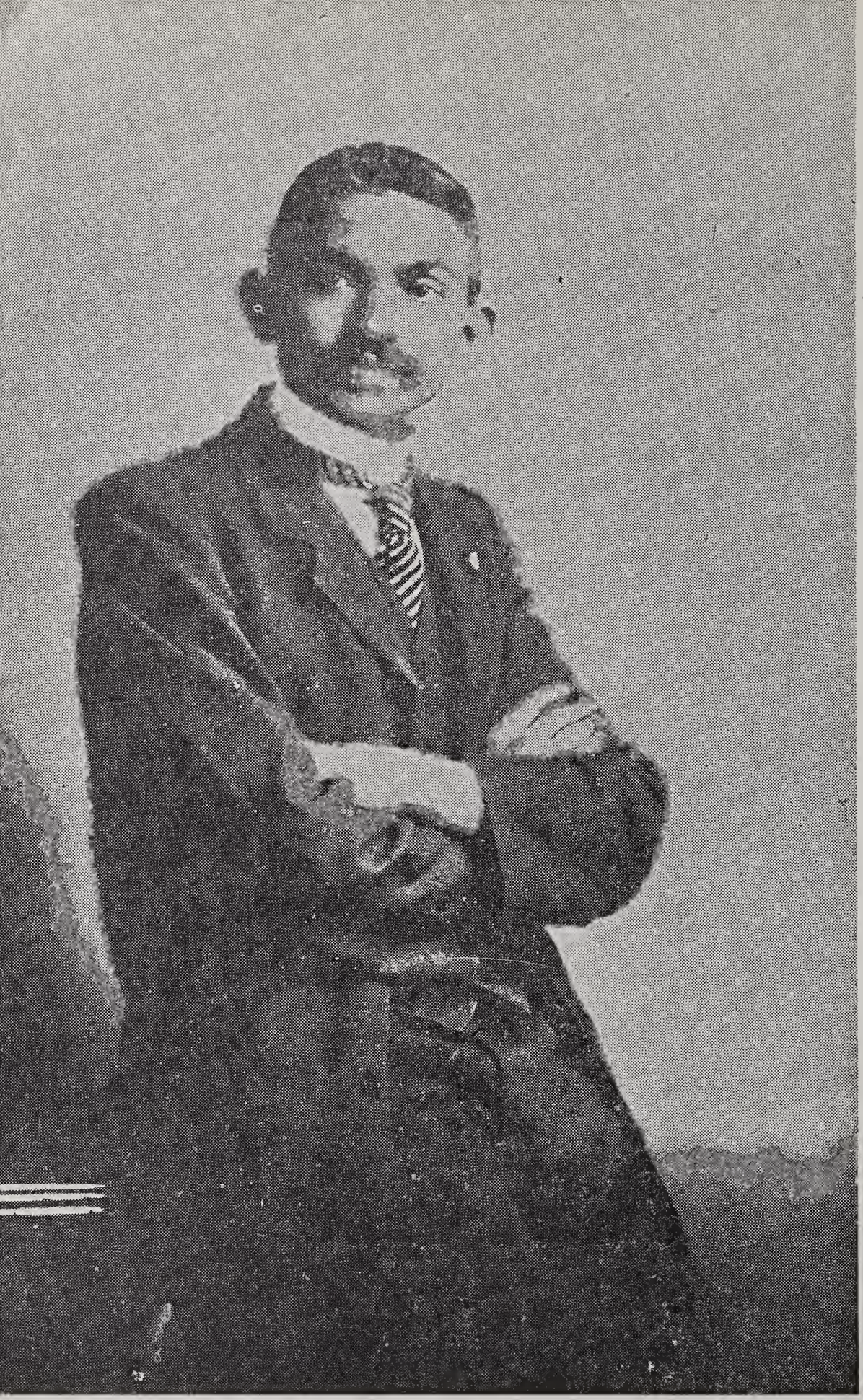
follow, but the crowd was large at the landing-stage, and became threatening. Mr. Laughton suggested a rickshaw and engaged one, but the people prevented the native from starting, so the two comrades walked together. When they reached West Street, the gathering was enormous, blocking all further progress. In the confusion and hustling, the friends were separated. Mr. Laughton was torn away, and stones, fish and rotton eggs began to fall around Mr. Gandhi. As he was pushed along, a burly European from behind shouted: "Are you the man who wrote to the Press?" and followed it up with a brutal kick. Mr. Gandhi held on, in an almost unconscious condition, to some railings nearby, and he was again kicked by his assailant.

Then a beautiful and brave thing happened, which throws some glory over this wretched scene. Mrs. Alexander, the wife of the Superintendent of Police, recognised him, and opening her sunshade to keep off the flying missiles, courageously went to his assistance, and when he attempted to go forward, she walked at his side. It was the instinct and act of a noble nature, and probably saved the victim from severe injury. Meanwhile, an Indian boy had run for the police, shouting that the crowd was killing Mr. Gandhi, and at the critical moment some constables appeared. The Superintendent offered an asylum in the police-station to Mr. Gandhi, but the latter was anxious about his wife, and preferred to go on to Mr. Rustomjee's. This he effected without further trouble.

When night fell, as the crowd became very large and threatening, shouting before the house and demanding Mr. Gandhi's surrender, Superintendent Alexander sent in to say, that if Mr. Gandhi did not wish to see his friend's house burnt down and desired to save his family,



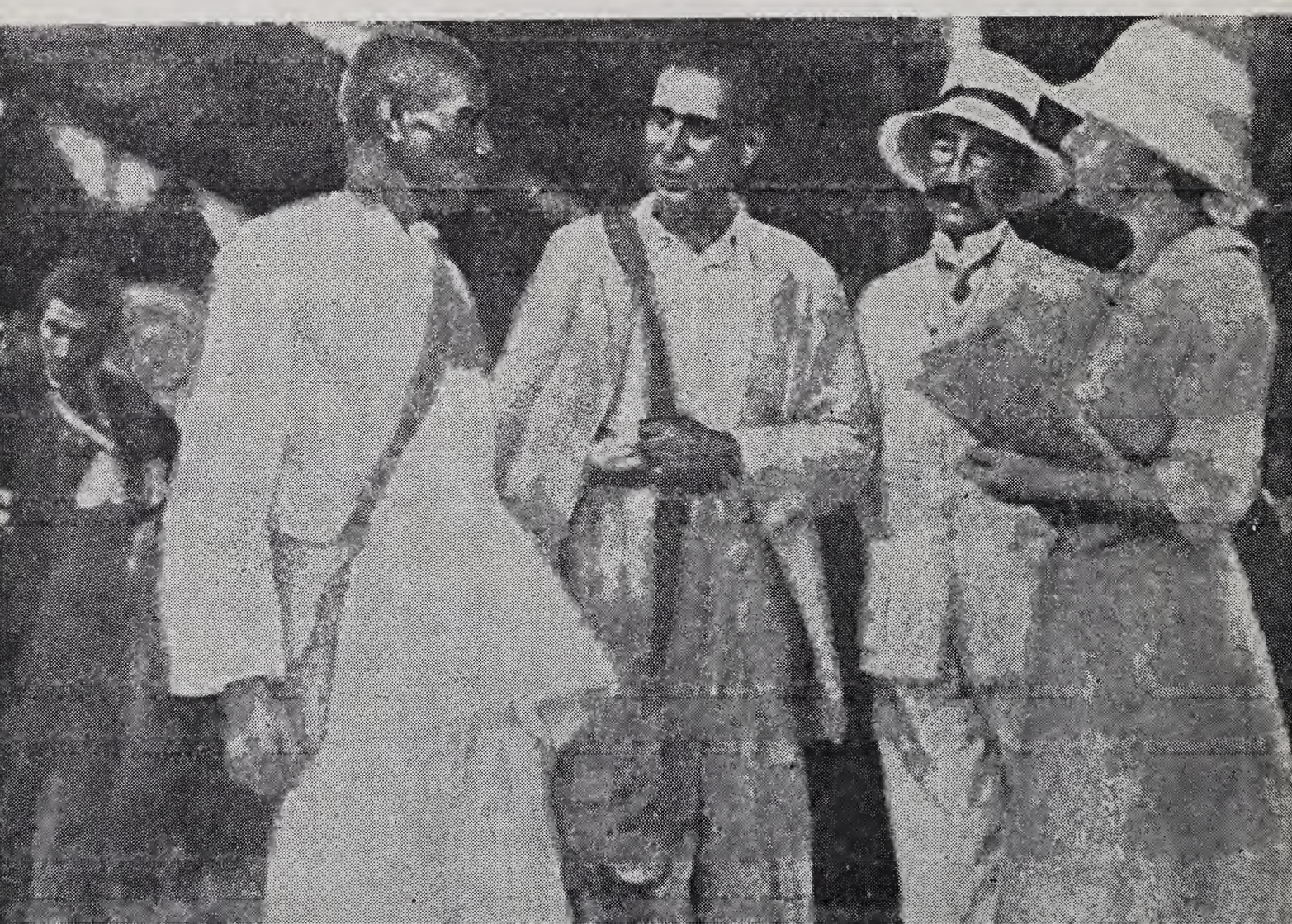
In 1903, Gandhiji (then known only as Mr. M.K. Gandhi) set up practice as an attorney in Johannesburg. This photograph, which was taken in his office at the corner of Rissik and Anderson Streets, belongs to that period.



Gandhiji, as he looked when the author met him for the first time in Johannesburg in December 1907

(Above) Gandhiji and Kasturba with the inmates of the Phoenix Settlement, a Tolstoian colony founded by him in Natal in 1904. Kasturb a is seated fifth from left. Gandhiji is standing behind the woman seated next to Kasturba. (Below) Gandhiji as a member of the Stretcher Bearer Corps, which he helped to raise for serving the wounded during the Zulu Rebellion in 1906.

(Left) Gandhiji, as he looked during the days of the 'passive resistance' movement launched by him in 1907 against oppression in South Africa. (Below) He is seen with friends at the peak of the movement.



he had better follow the directions which were given, and steal through the crowds disguised. This was done, and Mr. Gandhi, dressed as an Indian constable, with a metal saucer under his turban, and attended by a detective dressed as an Indian merchant, passed safely through the dense gathering. They were obliged to jump fences, squeeze between rails, and pass through a store, before they reached safety, but at last they found the police station, and remained there until the danger was over.

No doubt, much of this ill-feeling was due to misunderstanding, out of which unscrupulous men attempted to make capital. The Colonists were incensed at what they believed to have been the exaggerated statements and false accusations of Mr. Gandhi. They were angry at what they thought was an insult offered by him to Natal.

When they saw the printed address, and realised that it contained nothing worse than he had published before in Durban, there was a general feeling that the Colonists had been misled, and even the "Natal Mercury" changed its angry tone, saying "Mr. Gandhi on his part, and on behalf of his countrymen, has done nothing that he is not entitled to do, and from his point of view, the principle he is working for is an honourable and legitimate one. He is within his rights and so long as he acts honestly and in a straightforward manner, he cannot be blamed or interfered with. So far as we know, he has always done so, and his latest pamphlet, we cannot honestly say, is an unfair statement of the case from his point of view. Reuter's cable is a gross exaggeration of Mr. Gandhi's statement. He enumerates only a number of grievances, but these by no means justify anyone in stating that this pamphlet declares that the Indians in Natal are robbed and assaulted and treated like beasts, and are unable to obtain redress."

But, apparently, there were two other false factors in the irritation of Natal. It was rumoured that Mr. Gandhi was instigating the passengers on the two ships to sue the Government for placing them in quarantine and also that "he had organised an independent immigration agency in India to land his countrymen in Natal at the rate of one to two thousand per month," these passengers, supposed to amount to eight hundred, being the first instalment. This kind of charge has pursued its victim for years—a desire to flood South Africa with Indian immigrants. The whole accusation was shamelessly false. Mr. Gandhi never attempted to "get up" a case against the Natal Government, and the fact of his being in company with these passengers, really six hundred in number, two hundred only being for Natal, of whom one hundred were old residents, was due to the accident of his sudden recall.

Nevertheless, these rumours, repeated from lip to lip, awakened the keenest resentment—a feeling that was fostered and kindled to white heat by the unscrupulous leaders of the moment.

CHAPTER XIV

ON THE BATTLEFIELD

In October, 1899, when the War began, the stir and excitement that pervaded all classes of colonial society, touched even the Indians, and they desired to take some part in those great events which were happening around them. It was Mr. Gandhi's hope that their action in this crisis might prove at least their loyalty to the Empire, and refute the common sneer that, "if danger threatened the Colony, the Indians would run away." It was his repeated contention that if they were ready to assert their rights and to claim to be regarded as British subjects, they were equally ready and eager to accept the responsibilities of such a position. He accordingly counselled his people to volunteer for service in whatever capacity the Government would accept them. The proposal was taken up, and a formal offer was sent to the Government, but rejected, the Government saying that there was no need of help from the Indians.

Then Mr. Gandhi interviewed the Hon. R. Jameson, Member of the Legislative Council, to whom he was wellknown. Again he was disappointed, Mr. Jameson laughing at the idea. "You Indians," said he, "know nothing of war. You would only be a drag on the army; you would have to be taken care of, instead of being of help to us." "But," replied Mr. Gandhi, "is there nothing we can do ? Can we not do ordinary servants' work in connection with the Hospital ? Surely that will not demand very great intelligence ?" "No," he said, "it all needs training."

Disappointed, but not discouraged, the Indian leader

applied to his friend, Mr. Laughton, who received his suggestion with enthusiasm. "That's the very thing," he said, "do it; it will raise your people in the estimation of us all, and it will do them good. Never mind Mr. Jameson." So another letter was written to the Government, but this, too, failed.

Meanwhile, the pressure of disaster, and the unexpected developments of the War, were surely modifying the attitude of Natal. Everyone was needed. Briton and Boer were locked in a death-struggle, with the Garden Colony as the prize.

Events followed one another quickly. "It was on October 30th that Sir George White had been thrust back into Ladysmith. On November 2nd, telegraphic communication with the town was interrupted. On November 3rd, the railway line was cut. On November 10th, the Boers held Colenso and the line of the Tugela. On the 14th, was the affair of the armoured train. On the 18th the enemy were near Estcourt. On the 21st, they had reached the Mooi River. On the 23rd Hildyard attacked them at Willow Grange. From then onwards, Sir Redvers Buller was massing his troops at Chieveley, in preparation for a great effort to cross the river and to relieve Ladysmith, the guns of which, calling from behind the line of Northern Hills, told their constant tale of restless attack and stubborn defence." (Conan Doyle)

These were days of intense excitement in Durban, and the strain on all must have been severe. It tended, however, to draw together all sections of the community. It invested with heroism all who were willing to "go to the front," and it helped to awaken those better feelings, which afterwards found expression in the phrase "Sons of the Empire."

Hope centred in General Buller, but his problem was a difficult one, and hope was not always in the ascendant. That open ground on the southern bank of the Tugela River had to be negotiated, and it proved a repetition of Alma to our men. Then, beyond again, there was the passage of the river, and still beyond, "tier after tior of hills crowned with stone walls, and seamed with trenches, defended by thousands of the best marksmen in the world, supported by an admirable artillery." All this meant loss of life. It meant, too, the need of hospital provision and ambulances on a scale much larger than at first had been dreamed of. Hospitals were then formed, and European ambulance corps sent up, while doctors, nurses and bearers hurried to the front.

It was in this extreme necessity that the Indians obtained success. It is not often that men persist so doggedly in pressing their help upon unwilling people when help means, to those who offer, danger, suffering, perhaps death. It was an object lesson in that determination to prove themselves worthy of regard, which has since formed such a pathetic feature of their history here.

At this moment, Dr. Booth, who was then in charge of the Indian Anglican Mission, and Bishop Baynes made another attempt to further the effort of the Indians. At first there was no success, but when the Bishop interviewed Colonel Johnstone, and pointed out the necessity of increasing, or supplementing the provision already made, while the pressure of need on the banks of the Tugela became every day more intense. Mr. Gandhi's offer was at last favourably entertained, and sanction given for the formation of an Indian Ambulance Corps.

So soon as the principle was conceded, it became clear to the European officers that a very large corps would be desirable, and an approach was made to the

employers of indentured Indians to permit their men to volunteer for this service. The result was gratifying. When the call came, as it did very quickly, the Indians, free and indentured, who responded amounted to a thousand. The rank and file received the ordinary "bearer's" pay; the leaders gave their services. The Indian merchants supplied the stores and uniforms, and Dr. Booth himself joined the Corps in the capacity of Medical Superintendent.

As for Mr. Gandhi, I have never known him preach what he was unwilling to practise, and he naturally, in his enterprise, took such an active part, that General Buller described him as "Assistant Superintendent," and when the technical mistake was pointed out to him, he replied that he meant it as "a title of courtesy" for one who had done so much in this campaign.

The call to the front came on the day preceding the Battle of Colenso, and the thousand Indians reached the scene of the engagement in time to render invaluable service in the removal of the wounded. They entrained amidst scenes of unusual enthusiasm, reached Chieveley at the moment of need, and, without waiting to satisfy their hunger, marched on to Colenso, and then toiled on at their beneficent work all through the night.

The experience must have been terrible, for the wounded were so plentiful, and visions of dying agony stamped themselves indelibly on the memories of those who saw. Everywhere, over the plain and down by the river, heaps of wounded and dead lay. Roughly speaking, one hundred and fifty were killed, and seven hundred and twenty wounded, in this engagement. It was a call for help to which the Indians eagerly responded, and worked beside their European comrades with rival devotion.

One incident Mr. Gandhi refers to with pride. When the brave son of General Roberts was brought in fatally shot, in the affair of Long's guns, an Indian contingent was detailed to carry him seven miles to the base hospital at Chieveley.

After Colenso, the Indian bearers were disbanded, and sent back to Durban. They were told to expect another call soon. In all, they had given seven days to this work.

The second summons came on the eve of Spionkop, about a month later, and this time they remained three weeks in the field. During this period, they were more than once under fire. In the interval between the two engagements, about thirty-six of the Indian leaders had placed themselves in training under the instruction of doctors, so that they might prove of greater use in hospital work. It was the duty of the bearers to receive the wounded outside the line of fire and tramp with them to Frere, some twenty or thirty miles away. Mr. Gandhi was in charge of one of these parties, and when General Woodgate fell, the dying man was consigned to his care, and he helped to carry the sufferer from the field-hospital to the base-hospital. The agony of the General was excruciating during that march, and Mr. Gandhi tells how they hurried through the heat and dust, fearful lest he should die before they could reach camp.

It was during the hottest hour of this engagement, when men were falling fast on the further bank of the river, and there were few to help, that Major Bapte came to Mr. Gandhi, and explaining that he knew that the terms of their contract included immunity from the dangers of the firing line, said : "The need just now is great, and although I cannot urge it, yet, if your ambulance will cross the pontoon, and work from the other side, it

will be greatly appreciated." The pontoon was, of course, under fire, exposed to the guns of the enemy on the ridge above. The Indian leader put the question to his men, "Would they go?" They said "Yes," without hesitation, and in spite of the peril of death, they crossed the bridge and worked from the other side. None was allowed to climb the hill, but there was no need for that, the work at its base was sufficient, and the awful fire kept the stretcher-bearers employed between Spionkop and Frere for several hours. Not a few of our soldiers owe their lives to the efficient work done by the Indians that day.

They were again under fire at Vaal Krantz, the shells dropping a few yards in front of them as the bearers removed the men. Hospital orderlies, water-carriers, nurses, bearers, all were willing to do or be anything in this dire need; and although not frequently obliged to accept insults or to stand fire, they acquitted themselves with great credit, and earned the unstinted praise of the soldiers.

The work of British Indians on the battlefields of South Africa has received some recognition. Their dead have been honoured. A massive monument crowns an eminence overlooking Johannesburg, raised partly by public subscription, to the memory of those Indians who died in connection with the great war. It was the issue of a burst of enthusiasm for the faithful services done by those Eastern "Sons of the Empire," with whom Mr. Gandhi and his stretcher-bearers worked, when our people were in desperate straits. But that fine feeling has passed. It is difficult to understand how, within sight of this memorial, Indians should be made to suffer imprisonment and ruin, because of their desire to enjoy the rights of British citizens in the land for which they bled.

The memorial is in the form of an obelisk, and on its east side, a marble tablet bears the inscription in English, Urdu and Hindi :

"Sacred to the memory of British
Officers, Warrant Officers, Native
N.C.O's and Men, Veterinary
Assistants, Nalbands and Followers
of the Indian Army, who died in
South Africa. 1899-1902."

On the other sides, there are three tablets bearing respectively these words : Mussulman Christian-Zoroastrian, Hindu-Sikh

CHAPTER XV

THE HEART OF THE TROUBLE

When Mr. Gandhi returned from a brief visit to India after the war, he realised, perhaps, for the first time, the greatness of the work to which he had put his hand. He reached Pretoria on the 1st January, 1903. All was changed. The officials were new and unapproachable. An Asiatic Department had been created, and those in charge of it had, apparently, little sympathy with the Indians. He attempted to get into touch with Mr. Davidson, who was then Colonial Secretary, but failed. The local Indians had failed before him. Only after repeated efforts was he able to see this gentleman, and then he was courteously referred to the Assistant. The Assistant Colonial Secretary was not even courteous. He sent for the resident Indians, and censured them for inviting their leader to the Transvaal, saying that he (the Assistant Colonial Secretary) was there to look after their interests, and that he did not wish to see them in Mr. Gandhi's company. Then he sent for Mr. Gandhi, and rated him soundly for coming to the Colony, and said that he had no business there, and repeated his assertion that he alone should be consulted by the Indians. No effort was made by him to understand the position of affairs. "I do not wish to see you, nor to discuss these matters with you," he said.

Subsequently, at every turn, the same spirit was shown. In Natal, the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, who was then visiting South Africa, had received a deputation of Indians introduced by their leader. Mr. Gandhi's recall from India had, in fact, been partly in

view of this function. In Pretoria, he was officially excluded from a similar deputation. When the Municipal Council of Johannesburg desired to see the principal Indians, with regard to a new location or "bazaar," Mr. Gandhi's name was again struck off the list proposed by his people. In this case, however, the Indians absolutely refused to send any deputation in which their chief adviser was not included, and their decision was respected. Still, the uneasy conviction was awakened in the Indian mind, that the Government officials had resolved to fight remorselessly with Mr. Gandhi, and, if possible, eliminate his influence from Asiatic politics in the Transvaal. This was, in the view of the Indian community, a natural course for officialdom to take. It appeared to them that one clear legal mind in the community, coupled with a spotless character and wide experience, could make it impossible for them to be driven like cattle, or to be treated with contempt. It would also render impossible the continuance of that system of official corruption which had already commenced. The officials were afraid of Mr. Gandhi. They were all weaker, smaller men than he, and they knew it. It was natural that they should resent his appearance upon the scene. But whether this was a true inference or not, the line of conduct which the officials pursued was unwise in the extreme.

The Indians trusted their counsellor implicitly, as they do still. They knew his value, and loved him. Any attempt to ignore or insult their leader made them the more suspicious of the officials, more determined to retain him in their midst. The result might easily have been foreseen. Hostility and folly on the one side, suspicion and dogged determination on the other, have developed slowly but surely into the state of civil war

which humiliates the country today. If the Government had been represented by gentlemen of courtesy and discrimination, who could appreciate the delicate work of dealing with Orientals, and would take pains to understand their mode of thought, refusing to treat them as "coolies," the whole of this trouble might have been avoided. As it was, official ignorance, race-prejudice, and pride spoiled everything.

It became increasingly clear to the Indians that Mr. Gandhi must remain in the Transvaal and fight the battle through. It would have to be fought out chiefly in the Law Courts; therefore he must be admitted to practise in the Transvaal. This was the first step. Application for admission was accordingly made, and in April, 1903, Mr. Gandhi was enrolled as a duly qualified attorney of the Supreme Court.

The Indian objective was now defined. The policy which had formed an Asiatic Department they regarded as alien to the spirit of British citizenship, and subversive of just government. It must be opposed strenuously. Although, under the old Dutch rule, the Indians had suffered many hardships, there had been no such department. Under the British flag, the pre-war policy was developed, with the object of making the Asiatics a class apart, to be dealt with separately, and legislated against as aliens to the Empire. We can see, now, that the Asiatic Law Amendment Act of 1907 was the logical issue of this principle of segregation, with its imposition of degrading restrictions and its brand of the criminal. In 1903, the policy was already there.

Mr. Gandhi's aim was the incorporation of the Indian community as a useful part of the Transvaal Colony, and the recognition of its members as true citizens of the Empire. Everything that tended to segre-

gate, to separate, to stigmatise them as unworthy of the rights of citizens, was to his mind an insult to their character, a national injury and a travesty of British justice. He was prepared to resist this policy to the uttermost.

These British Indians were nearly all pre-war residents of the Transvaal. They held permits from the Dutch Government, for which they had paid a statutory fee of £3 to £25, or else they were recognised as having a right to reside here by virtue of possessing Peace Preservation Ordinance permits. Many of them had large financial interests in the country. Not a few had been born here. It was to win justice and citizenship for these that Mr. Gandhi directed all his energy.

Since then, no doubt, suspicion on either side has been the cause of many mistakes. The Indians have sometimes arrived at untrue conclusions, imagining wrongs and slights when these were not intended. On the other hand, the initial treatment of Mr. Gandhi by the Asiatic Department had been their experience ever since. From such sowing, no harvest but one of suspicion and resentment could spring, and the end is not yet. The British Government in the Transvaal has given these men no reason to be other than suspicious and resentful.

Lord Milner's promise to them has been broken. His formal announcement, made while High Commissioner, speaking with all the authority with which his office invested him, was in the following terms :

> "I think that registration is a protection to them. To that registration there is attached a £3 tax. It is only asked for once; those who have paid it to the old Government have only to prove that they have done so, and they have not to pay it again. Again,

once on the register, their position is established, and no further registration is necessary nor is a fresh permit required. That registration gives them a right to be here and a right to come and go."

The recent prosecutions and imprisonment of members who relied on the word of the then High Commissioner, and re-registered voluntarily at that time, is a strange commentary on British honour. The promise has been shamefully broken.

The promise which the Asiatics understood General Smuts to have made at a time when the leaders were in prison, they also regard as broken. It formed the chief inducement to the Asiatics to re-register a second time voluntarily, in accordance with the compromise. The Colonial Secretary's own statement, made in a speech at Richmond, on February 5th of this year, is significant. "The Indian's second contention was," he said, "that they would never register until the law had been repealed, that the law was an indignity and disgrace. I told them that the law would not be repealed so long as there was an Asiatic in the country who had not been registered, and, like wise men, the leaders of the Indian community had waived the question of repeal. Until every Indian in the country has registered, the law will not be repealed." Relying on this inducement, and a verbal promise that a bill would be introduced at the next session of Parliament by Government, with the object of repealing that law, they waived the "contention" that repeal must come before registration, and they registered, loyally adhering to the terms of the compromise. They did even more than the compromise required of them, in order to help the Government, the leaders giving their digit impressions to encourage the rank and file to do the same. When, however, the

registration was complete, and the aim of the Government was reached, the Colonial Secretary repudiated his part of the contract. General Smuts has said in Parliament: "It may have been a misunderstanding." The Asiatics say: "It was a broken promise."

Lord Selborne counselled the Royal sanction to a measure which stamped them as a nation of criminals. By its administration they have been illegally deported, fined, and imprisoned, until their confidence in British justice is in ruins. It will need a generation of wise and good rule to restore it.

CHAPTER XVI

PLAGUE DAYS

The early part of 1904 was marked by unusual rain. Johannesburg was simply drenched. For seventeen days together the clouds hung low, and the rain soaked the city. Then the plague appeared. At first, and for some time, the municipal authorities were unable to diagnose the disease, and the needful precautions were neglected. Mr. Gandhi, confident, from his experience in India, that these scattered cases were actually cases of pneumonic plague, and that, under the insanitary conditions of the old location, a condition which, he says, was due to the neglect of the municipality, a severe outbreak might be expected, reported his convictions, and urged them with but little success, until the disaster reached proportions which challenged immediate action. Mr. Madanjit, the publisher of *Indian Opinion* was, at that time, staying in Johannesburg, and on the 18th March, Mr. Gandhi received a note from him, written in the Indian location, full of alarming news. It seemed that Indians were being brought in from the mines, in numbers, dying or dead, stricken with this terrible disease. The numbers during that day reached a total of twenty-three, of which twenty-one proved fatal.

At once Mr. Gandhi took the matter into his own hands. Sending word to Dr. Pakes, who was acting for the Medical Officer of Health, and to the Town Clerk, he hurried off in company with an inspector to the scene of the trouble, and began a hand-to-hand fight with death. With Mr. Madanjit and four Indian volunteers, he broke open an empty store, converted it into

a hospital, and collected the patients from the different stands. Dr. Godfrey, also an Indian, soon joined them, and rendered extraordinary service throughout that day and the following night. Probably their promptitude in separating the infected men saved Johannesburg from an appalling disaster.

Late in the afternoon, the Town Clerk held a conference with Mr. Gandhi on the outskirts of the location and thanked him for the work which had been done, but added that no further provision could be made for the patients that day. He would leave them to Mr. Gandhi's care, authorising any expenditure that he deemed needful. "Tomorrow morning," he said, "some suitable place will be found."

It was an awful experience for the devoted little band. Under the pressure of alarm, the Indian community held a mass meeting and subscribed funds. Stores were provided by Indian shop-keepers and what willing hands could do was zealously done. But all through the night men were dying in agony, while the dread of infection kept other helpers away. Mr. Gandhi's personal influence, however, and Dr. Godfrey's unremitting work stimulated their handful of volunteer nurses, who toiled heroically.

The Report published by the Rand Plague Committee has the following entries :

"During the evening of the 18th March, Mr. Gandhi, Dr. Godfrey, and Mr. Madanjit interested themselves, removed all the sick Indians they could find to Stand 36, Coolie Location, procured some beds, blankets, etc., and made the sufferers as comfortable as possible.

"At 6.30 a.m. on the 19th, Dr. Mackenzie and the writer visited the location and found some seventeen patients either dead or dying.

"On Saturday morning, the 19th, the patients had been removed from their homes to a vacant stand No. 36, and temporary arrangements had been made by the Indians themselves for nursing and feeding the sufferers, chiefly through the agency of Mr. M. K. Gandhi and his friends."

These are the only official intimations made of the splendid work which was done officially during those terrible days.

Early on the morning of the 19th, the old custom-house, near the gas-works, was provided by the Municipal Council as a temporary hospital, and the Indians were left to cleanse and fit it up as best they could. Some thirty men volunteered for the work, and the place was speedily made habitable, and the patients were installed. A nurse was then sent down from the Johannesburg Hospital, and Dr. Pakes was placed in charge. But out of twenty-five patients admitted on Saturday, only five were living on Sunday night. Subsequently the plague patients were conveyed to Rietfontein, Lazaretto, and a suspect camp, under Mr. Gandhi and Dr. Godfrey, was formed at Klipspruit.

In addition to the work of these gentlemen, invaluable help was rendered by Mr. L. W. Ritch, who has since become so well known as Secretary of the South Africa British Indian Committee in London. He was, at that time, articled to Mr. Gandhi, and claimed the privilege of helping him. His devotion in nursing these plague patients at great peril to his life was in keeping with the fine and persistent service which he still renders in the Homeland, where he has devoted his unique talents ungrudgingly to the Indian cause.

The trouble continued for about a month. The number of deaths, during that time, amounted to one

hundred and thirteen in Johannesburg, including twenty-five whites, fifty-five Indians, four "coloured" people and twenty-nine natives. Its force, however, was broken by the prompt measure of those first critical days. Meanwhile, Johannesburg went on its way, almost unconscious of its danger, quite insensible to the services rendered by a handful of Indians.

Those who know think of another story :

"Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man."

History repeats itself.

CHAPTER XVII

A DREAMER

Two enterprises will always be associated with Mr. Gandhi's name and work in South Africa. One is the propaganda, commenced in 1903, among his own people, by means of a weekly journal called *Indian Opinion;* the other, that little Tolstoyan Colony in Phœnix, where *Indian Opinion* is now published. Both of them have exerted a great influence on the Indian community.

Mr. Gandhi is a dreamer. He dreams of an Indian community in South Africa, welded together by common interests and common ideals, educated, moral, worthy of that ancient civilisation to which it is heiry remaining essentially Indian, but so acting that South Africa will eventually be proud of its Eastern citizens, and accord them, as of right, those privileges which every British subject should enjoy. This is the dream. His ambition is to make it a reality, or die in the attempt. And this is the motive that forms the foundation of all his efforts to raise the status of his people, and to defeat everything that would tend to degrade his brethren or hold them in a servile condition.

But Mr. Gandhi is a practical dreamer. As his life-work took shape, he realised that his plans could only be materialised by the creation of some medium of constant intercourse with Indians throughout the South African Colonies, and after mature thought *Indian Opinion* was launched.

A printing plant was already at work in Durban, under the direction of Mr. Madanjit, a Bombay school-

master. In view of possible development, Mr. Gandhi had contributed a large proportion of its cost. This printing plant was now available. Mr. M. H. Nazar at once volunteered to act as unpaid editor. He was a man of great culture, an under-graduate of Bombay University, a trained journalist, and one whose character was tried. His death, two years later, was a profound loss to the community. Mr. Nazar's offer was accepted, and on the understanding that Mr. Gandhi should contribute certain funds, and write constantly for the English columns, the first number was issued.

The enterprise was necessary, but it proved to be very costly. At first, being a novelty to the community, its value was not realised. The majority of the Indians were not inclined towards literature, and time was needed to arouse interest. Then, too, its production involved considerable initial expense, as it was published in English, Tamil, Gujarati, and Hindi, with a very limited circulation.

Its mission appeared, however, to Mr. Gandhi to be so essential to his dream that during the first twelve months he supplied for its working expenses about £2,000 from his own income. Fortunately, at a critical moment, £1,600 of this amount had come to him from the Municipality of Johannesburg, through costs awarded in a succession of lawsuits.

Since then, *Indian Opinion* has done very fine service to the Indian community. Undoubtedly, passive resistance would have been impossible without it. It has been a wonderful educational force, and under the able and cultured editorship of Mr. Polak its influence promises to be still greater. But at the close of the first year, as the deficit was so large, it became necessary for Mr. Gandhi either to close the venture or to assume the

entire charge himself. He decided on the latter course, and has borne the responsibility ever since. It has, however, been a constant tax on him, as *Indian Opinion* has never paid its way.

In 1904 Mr. Gandhi dreamed another dream. This is his own account of it. "After the Plague I paid a flying visit to my cousins at Tongaat, in Natal. I saw their store, but what attracted me most was the acre of garden ground at the back where some fruit trees were planted. These looked so beautiful, and the possibilities of the land appeared to be so great that the idea occurred to me that my cousins were wasting their time in the store when so much work and so much beauty lay around them. They simply employed labour to cultivate the garden, and it was done poorly. Why could they not labour themselves and do it well? I had been reading Ruskin's *Unto this Last* on my way down, and the influence of the book clung to me. Surely such a dream might be realised."

Mr. Chhaganlal Gandhi, his brother, and another store-keeping cousin from Stanger were also present, and between them the idea was discussed.

Then new dream induced by that acre of fruit trees and *Unto this Last* was this. The handful of men already employed in the issue of *Indian Opinion* should form the nucleus of a colony of workers. They should take land in the country, transfer the printing press to new buildings to be erected there, vow themselves to poverty, work for *Indian Opinion* and Indian education, cultivate the ground themselves and draw only a small salary from the press. They would, in this way, be able, Mr. Gandhi thought, to free themselves from the temptation of city life, and develop such a

settlement as might prove an object lesson in simplicity, and an incentive to others.

Mr. Gandhi's enthusiasm is marvellously contagious. He put it as a practical matter to Mr. Chhaganlal who at once agreed. He submitted it to the cousins of the store, and they promised to break up their homes and attempt to materialise his dream. Then he returned to Durban to put his scheme before Mr. A. H. West, an English friend, who was then managing the press, and who has since as joint manager with Mr. Chhaganlal done yeoman service to the Indian cause. Mr. West, too, accepted it. The issue of it all was that, within ten days, Mr. Gandhi had bought a piece of ground in his own name at Phœnix, suitable for a settlement. Within a month, an iron building, belonging to Mr. Parsee Rustomji, had been erected there, and the whole press transferred from Durban to its new quarters without the interruption of a single issue. Since then, a little colony has formed around that centre. Houses have been built, land has been cultivated, a school commenced, and the value of a simple life abundantly demonstrated. The village is situated at about two hours distance from Durban, on the hill sides of a rich grassy country, with trees at intervals, and well-cultivated gardens showing brightly between. Mr. Gandhi's home is here, and in brief intervals of harassing toil in Johannesburg, he finds complete rest in returning to the settlement and working as others work.

The settlers of Phœnix are divided into two classes—the "schemers" and the paid workers. The "schemers" are those who have a personal interest in the scheme. They are granted an acre of ground with a building, for which it is understood they are allowed to pay when they are able. Besides this, they draw £3 per month from

Indian Opinion, with a right to divide the profits, if any. The others are simply paid for what they do.

So far, these dreams are realised, but they have absolutely impoverished the dreamer. What *Indian Opinion* has not required, Phœnix has. To meet these demands, however, is part of his conception of duty, and in such self-sacrifice, bringing poverty with it, he is true to his ideal.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ZULU REBELLION

In 1906, just before the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance was passed by the Provisional Government, the Zulu rebellion began, and an offer was made by the National Indian Congress, at Mr. Gandhi's suggestion, to raise a Stretcher Bearer Corps for service with the troops, as had been done in the late Boer War. Difficulty was experienced, however, and the matter was delayed.

In June, owing to the uncertainty of the political situation, Mr. Gandhi broke up his home, and took his wife and family to Natal. Somewhat to his surprise, on reaching Durban, he found that the offer of a Bearer Corps had been accepted, and that the men were waiting for him to take command. The Corps numbered twenty free Indians. Mr. Gandhi was offered the rank of Sergeant-Major, with three Sergeants and one Corporal under him.

With his usual whole-heartedness, he threw himself into the work, and during the month that followed, he and his men were present at nearly all the engagements. The supposed work of the Corps was to carry the wounded; but early in the campaign, other duties were pressed upon them.

Dr. Savage, who was in charge of the ambulance, asked if they objected to enlarge the scope of their work. When they replied that they were willing to do all they could, he placed the sanitation of the camp in their hands, and employed them as nurses to those Zulus who had been lashed.

Mr. Gandhi speaks with great reserve of this experience. What he saw he will never divulge. I imagine it was not always creditable to British humanity. As a man of peace, hating the very thought of war, it was almost intolerable for him to be so closely in touch with this expedition. At times, he doubted whether his position was right. No one besides his men, however, was prepared to do the work, and sheer pity for the sufferers forbade them to relinquish it. Not infrequently the condition of the lashed men, who were placed in their charge, was appalling, the wounds filthy, their lives hanging in the balance. Dr. Savage won the unstinted praise of all. To the native patients he was invariably humane. But among the Europeans, apparently, he was the exception. So these Indians toiled at their irksome tasks day after day, cleansing wounds, binding up rents which the lash had made, carrying the helpless men behind the cavalry, up and down the hills for twenty and twenty-five miles at a stretch, or attending to the sanitation of the camp.

It was a month of hard, self-sacrificing toil. Nor was it a light thing for these Indians to do this work. They were members of a sensitive and cultured race, with the elements of an ancient civilisation going to make up their characters—men from whose fathers the world has received portions of its finest literature, and examples of its greatest thought. It was no trifle for such men to become voluntary nurses to men not yet emerged from the most degraded state. But distinctions of this kind are rarely appreciated in South Africa. Indians are coloured, and are accordingly classed with aboriginal natives. In the Transvaal, they are not allowed to ride in the trams, and there are special compartments for them in the trains. In our prisons "N" is stitched to their

collars, to denote the people with whom they are classed, and in food—though the food is wholly unsuitable—in clothing, in work, in the cells, to all intents and purposes they are "natives."

One of the greatest difficulties during this passive resistance struggle has been over the question of food. Natives have their particular diet—mealie-pap, chiefly, and crushed mealies mixed with an ounce of animal fat—a spare diet, but suited to native habits. When the inrush of passive resisters came, and hundreds of Indians, many of them cultured men, thronged the gaols, they were put upon the same diet, with the exception that, in some of the prisons, *ghee* or clarified butter was made to replace the fat, and rice to replace the crushed mealies. A cast-iron system required that they should be classed as natives, and because they were so classed, they were forced to be content with native diet. Although they had never been accustomed to diet of this kind, and it caused both additional hardships and illness, their friends were unable to obtain any change. The short-sentence prisoners were those who suffered most. Even a little bread would have been some relief.

But in Pretoria and in some of the other prisons, the disadvantage of being classed with natives was even more intolerable. Because "animal fat" was placed in the regulations to be cooked with crushed mealies, animal fat was systematically given. This was an infringement religious principle which fell heavily on the Indians. The passive resisters were divided into two classes—the Hindus, to most of whom all animal food is under religious proscription, and the Mohammedans, who are only permitted to use it if it has been ritually killed. To both of these, the fat supplied by the prison authorities was an abomination, and since it was cooked

with the crushed mealies, they preferred to content themselves with rice, which was served only at mid-day—and starve rather than take the food which had been defiled. Those who were responsible for this prison-diet were implored to substitute *ghee* for animal fat, as had been done in Johannesburg but without success. Only after an interview with the Director of Prisons, and petitions and newspaper letters, was anything done, and then, as though in irony, the animal fat was withdrawn, without *ghee* being supplied. And this is the position today.*

There is no perception of the immense distance which separates the Indian from the Kaffir in the scale of civilisation. To the average Colonial, they are all "niggers" alike. But to those who think, this Ambulance Corps, tenderly ministering to the wounded or cruelly lashed Zulus—with the son of an Indian Prime Minister at their head—is worthy of an artist's brush. Some day, perhaps, it will have its need.

*This defect has since been modified by recent regulations.—L.W.R.

CHAPTER XIX

THE GREAT STRUGGLE

Soon after Mr. Gandhi's return to Johannesburg, the Indian community decided that it was essential for a deputation to visit England for the purpose of preventing, if possible, the Royal sanction being given to the Asiatic measure, which the Provisional Government had framed and passed, and Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Ally were appointed to this duty. To some extent the deputation was successful. The delegates were courteously received by all sections of the British public and the issue of their efforts was the delay of Imperial action until the Transvaal should have formed its Constitutional Government. This was as much as they could expect. During the stay of the deputation in London, a Committee was formed to watch their interests and to influence Parliament in any crisis. The deputation was particularly fortunate in securing Mr. L. W. Ritch as Secretary, and when Lord Ampthill accepted the office of President, with Sir Mancherji Bhownaggree as Chairman of the Executive Committee, the position and power of the organisation were assured. It has since abundantly justified its birth.

But Mr. Gandhi's mission to England delayed the evil day only for a while. So soon as the Provisional Government had given place to a Constitutional Government, the same Act, which had so stirred the Asiatic community, was passed by Parliament at a single sitting, and again submitted to the King.

The measure was passed so hurriedly that its provisions were not discussed, and even the Colonial Secre-

tary was not familiar with them. Three readings in one day concluded the matter, and in a short time the Royal sanction was given.

It was then that the movement, known as the "Passive Resistance Movement," took practical form. This was in July, 1907. At the same time, the resident Chinese, to the number of about one thousand, joined the Indians. Most of the Chinese were not British subjects, but as they were Asiatics, and involved in the new law, they felt the pressure of its provisions. They were splendidly organised at the time, and under the leadership of Mr. Leung Quinn, stood firm in the great struggle.

The leader's right hand during all these months of ceaseless strain has been his brilliant English comrade, Mr. H. S. L. Polak, who, like Mr. Gandhi himself, is an attorney of the Supreme Court of the Transvaal. For weeks together, while the chief has been in prison, the burden of the struggle has fallen on Mr. Polak, who has borne it with unwavering courage, the community having elected him as Assistant Secretary of the Transvaal British Indian Association. Knowing well all the twists and legal points in this strange business, he has been of invaluable assistance to the harassed passive resisters. In Court he has been their advocate, in the office their adviser, always their friend, at the same time he has devoted himself to the general interests of the British Indians, throughout South Africa, by pen and speech, with wonderful persistence. Like all great leaders of men, Mr. Gandhi has the magic power of attracting and attaching to himself the passionate devotion of such characters.

But the strain of this long resistance has told severely on the Indian community. Many of them have been

practically ruined. Nevertheless, their splendid courage, determination, and self-restraint have won the admiration of all. The vegetable and fruit-sellers, the "hawkers," have entered into the spirit of the campaign with as great self-sacrifice and devotion as the wealthy men have shown. They have cheerfully gone in droves to prison. Some have suffered again and again. The justice of their cause has thrown a glamour even over the gloom of the cell and the degradation of their work. This is not, one would imagine, a good thing for the future effect of the prison system, but it is the natural issue of the use which our rulers have made of it, in this controversy with men whom General Smuts described as "conscientious objectors." Their repeated imprisonment for such a cause has obliterated the criminal taint and the shame of such punishment, and they have taken "joyfully the spoiling of their goods."

No one, however, can doubt that the personality of their great leader has been the supreme force in it all. His committal to prison is sufficient to arouse all their powers of self-sacrifice, and they embarrass the police officers in their efforts to be arrested too. Even when he is absent for weeks, his influence moves them with marvellous power. What he would do, or wish, or say is the pivot on which the lives of many of them turn.

"What are you going to do ?" I said the other day to our vegetable-hawker. He shrugged his shoulders, spread out his hands, smiled, showing his white teeth.

"Mr. Gandhi, we know," he replied, "if Mr. Gandhi say go to prison, we go."

I believe if Mr. Gandhi said "die," not a few would cheerfully obey him.

Some, of course, are untouched; they bitterly oppose him. But for most of his countrymen, he is what one

called him, with reverent affection, "our true Karma Yogi."

The difficulty has now been whittled down to two disputed points, neither of them being of the least importance to the Colonists, both vitally affecting the Asiatics. The one point is the repeal of the Asiatic Law Amendment Act, which began the trouble. Its repeal was the objective of these men from the very beginning. It formed a verbal but an essential part of the compromise, to which they understood the Government to assent, and its retention on the Statute-book is the cause of unending dispute. It cannot remain and be inoperative. It is operative now, although an Act has been passed which is supposed to supersede it. In addition to this, it has been acknowledged officially to be unworkable. The repeal of that Act is one aim of this continued struggle.

The other point is the status of educated Indians. Mr. Gandhi and his compatriots have never attempted to "flood the country with Asiatics." They would naturally desire an "open door," but owing to the character of the country and the temper of the Colonists, they recognise and accept the necessity of imposing severe restrictions on such immigration. They claim, however, that, if they are to be so restricted, they shall be allowed the means of development along the lines of their own civilisation, and under their own natural teachers. The present Immigrants Restriction Act provides for the admission of such educated men as may be able to pass an education test, the severity of which is within the discretion of the immigration officer. The Asiatics claim that they come under the operation of that Act. This, the Government refuses to admit. Nothing will satisfy them but absolute prohibition of Asiatics not already domiciled there. In these circumstances, the Asiatics

offer, of their own accord, to limit the entry of their cultured men to a maximum of six in any one year; all Indians desiring to enter to be administratively subjected to whatever educational test the Colonial Secretary may enforce, and admitted or rejected according to the result. If the door is closed on their countrymen, the Indians claim that it shall not be closed on the ground of colour or race.

Their claims are modest, reasonable and just. If they are to become worthy members of the commonwealth, they should be permitted to secure the means of development. They are surely entitled to have their own doctors, lawyers, and religious teachers. At present, all sections of the community recognise the need of importing educated men from other countries. No religious denomination in South Africa can as yet afford to content itself with Colonial ministers, and least of all the Asiatics.

The Government offers, in its new Act, to grant "temporary permits" to meet their claim, but it demands no great keenness of perception to recognise the utter futility of this offer. A "permit," which might be cancelled at any moment at the caprice of an official, would be useless to a self-respecting man. No cultured Asiatic of any character would submit to accept such a "ticket-of-leave," and the Asiatic community refuses the proposal as a basis of settlement. The claim is for the possible admission of not more than six, as of right, not of grace, if they are able to pass the educational test imposed. So far, these modest claims have been refused by Government, although, in their attempt to administer those objectionable laws, they have proved their worthlessness. Judges, magistrates and police officers have been alike perplexed over the meaning of these compli-

cated measures, and the Supreme Court has been obliged to give its verdict against the Government.

To infer, however, that the Asiatics clamour for a change of Government, owing to these unjust and unfortunate actions, would be a great mistake. This is not a political agitation. A change of Government would bring no relief. General Botha is a kindly, fair-minded man and the members of the Government, as a whole, would doubtless compare favourably with the members of any other Government. Moral questions find amongst them the response of conscience, and in many cases, conscience and religion; in this matter only, religion and conscience have been borne down by considerations of expedience and popularity. As for the Progressive Party, it has allied itself to Het Volk on this subject. A change of Government would bring no solution and no relief.

Two great sources of trouble have been racial prejudice among the Colonists, and official incapacity in the Asiatic Department. The former cannot be changed at once; time will do much. The latter should be altered without delay. However able these officials may be in other respects, they are not fitted to deal with Indians. They do not understand them, and treat them as "coolies." If there had been a strict adherence to promises given, and a courteous recognition of religious convictions, by those who are placed in charge of Asiatic affairs, we should probably have heard nothing of the trouble that is so perplexing today.

Justice and courtesy would go far to settle the whole Asiatic difficulty.

CHAPTER XX

THE OTHER SIDE

That there is another side to the Asiatic question may be accepted as certain. The opposition is not all injustice, nor is it due, with many, to race prejudice or greed. There is a profound conviction, with great numbers of thoughtful Colonists, that South Africa should be a "white man's country," and that the free admission of Asiatics would mean a large influx of Easterns who would frustrate that desire. The bugbear of the Colonists is that vast, waiting multitude in India, ever supposed to be pressing against their gate, and ready to flood the country, should resistance cease for a moment.

This fear has been created chiefly by the conditions of Indian trade. Men argue that these strangers can live on such a trifling pittance, their wants are so few, that they are able to undersell the white man and oust him from the market, and that, in fact, in some townships, they have done so. No one can help feeling great sympathy with these fears. British Colonists have burdens to bear, of which the lightly accoutred Indian today feels nothing, owing to enforced circumstances.

One of our prominent citizens, speaking a while since at a meeting of the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce, put these views into forcible, if homely, words : "I believed Mr. Gandhi, to be a thorough gentleman, cultured, conscientious, and thoroughly educated, and a firm believer in the position he had taken up. But, all the same, he believed Mr. Gandhi to be wrong; but, whether he was right or wrong, the fact remained that this question had become one of self-preser-

vation. If the action of the Government ruined the Empire in one hundred years or so, it would be extremely regrettable. When a people tried to crush others weaker than themselves, it was a sure indication that they would fall. It was so with the Roman Empire, but they in this country had something more to think of today. They had to think of their bread-and-butter, and of their children's bread-and-butter." This, perhaps, expresses the thoughts of the majority.

There is a feeling, too, that the white man, who has fought for the country, and has spent blood and treasure to maintain his ascendency, is engaged in laying the foundation of a great Empire, and there is no intention, so far as these Colonists are concerned, of putting a faulty brick into the building. They have no wish to turn out the Indians who are at present domiciled here, but they think it wise to make it impossible for the children of the East to reap the benefits of their travail. These are the thoughts which influence a large proportion of our people.

Mr. Gandhi's reply completely recognises the moderate temper of these views. He points out that the white Colonists and the resident Indians are practically at one. Neither has any intention of throwing open the gates of South Africa to an unrestricted immigration from the East. "The East is not waiting," he says, "to flood South Africa with Indians; the resident Indians do not wish an influx of their brethren." On that point both are agreed.

They are agreed also on another point. Those Asiatics who have a right to be here should be allowed to remain. A rabid, irresponsible party of white Colonists undoubtedly do desire to turn out the Asiatics, but they are not the majority. The majority say: "We do

not wish to turn out those who have interests already in the country, and the right to be here; we only desire to prevent others from coming." So far both are at one.

Then Mr. Gandhi points out, further, that, since the Asiatics who are here by right are to remain, and as immigration is to be severely restricted, it becomes a matter of justice and political wisdom to permit the provision of means for the uplifting of these citizens, so that they may become an asset of value to South Africa. "Let us have," he urges, "a few of our best men to teach us, to bring the highest ideals with them, to advise and shepherd us, and to minister to our spiritual needs, that we may not sink to the level of the aboriginal natives, but rise to be, in every sense, worthy citizens of the Empire. Let the municipal officers work with us and insist on proper sanitation, on better houses, on a process of levelling up, so that Indian and European may not compete on such unequal terms. Do not encourage the idea that your Indian fellow-citizens are dogs. You may impress that view upon them until they accept it out of sheer necessity, and live like dogs. Let the Indian have some incentive to rise, by allowing him to acquire a piece of ground on which to build a decent house; stimulate him to think of the interests of the country, by giving him some voice in the settlement of those great concerns which affect the welfare of all; treat him as a man and a citizen, and he will become one." It is to the moderate, just, and thoughtful Colonist that Mr. Gandhi appeals, and such, we may hope, will rule the destiny of South Africa. These recognise the justice of his claim, but at present, they either form the minority, or are borne down and silenced by those who clamour that it is inexpedient to make any concession to the Indians.

In these Colonies, our eyes are too much centred on that little circle in which we live, and on the immediate difficulties which face us. We are too parochial. We leave too much out of view the larger interests of the Empire; and those great Imperial concerns which have their home in India. We need a statesman of wide experience and of far-reaching gaze, who will arouse us to look beyond our borders, teach us how to legislate greatly, and shame us from our selfishness. Nay, more. No country can afford to build injustice into its walls. Such material is worthless, and will bring disaster. Amidst all the conflicting interests of the day, this, at any rate, should be clear: "Righteousness exalteth a nation."

CHAPTER XXI

PASSIVE RESISTANCE

The idea of passive resistance as a means of opposing evil is inherent in Indian philosophy. In old time, it was called "to sit *dhurna*." Sometimes a whole community would adopt this method towards their Prince. It has been so in the history of Porbandar; then trade was dislocated and force helpless before the might of passive resistance.

Bishop Heber wrote of it many years ago in his journal : "To sit *dhurna,* or mourning, is to remain motionless in that posture, without food, and exposed to the weather, till the person against whom it is employed consents to the request offered, and the Hindus believe that whoever dies under such a process becomes a tormenting spirit to haunt and afflict his inflexible antagonist."

He tells how, at one time, passive resistance was resolved on and how "accordingly, the news flew over the country like the fiery cross in the 'Lady of the Lake,' and three days after it was issued, and before the Government were in the least apprised of the plan, above three hundred thousand persons, as it is said, deserted their houses, shut up their shops, suspended the labour of their farms, forbore to light fires, dress victuals, many of them even to eat, and sat down with folded arms and drooping heads, like so many sheep, on the plain which surrounds Benares."

This familiarity with the idea of passive resistance, no doubt, accounts to some extent for the comparative readiness with which it has been adopted by the Indians

in the Transvaal. Probably, too, it affected insensibly their leader. Mr. Gandhi himself attributes the birth and evolution of this principle, so far as he is concerned, to quite other influences.

"I remember," he said, "how one verse of a Gujarati poem, which, as a child, I learned at school, clung to me. In substance it was this :

> 'If a man gives you a drink of water and you give him a drink in return, that is nothing;
> Real beauty consists in doing good against evil.'

As a child, this verse had a powerful influence over me, and I tried to carry it into practice. Then came the 'Sermon on the Mount.' "

"But surely," said I, "the *Bhagavad Gita* came first."

"No," he replied, "of course I knew the *Bhagavad Gita* in Sanskrit tolerably well, but I had not made its teaching in that particular a study. It was the New Testament which really awakened me to the rightness and value of passive resistance. When I read in the 'Sermon on the Mount' such passages as 'Resist not him that is evil but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also,' and 'Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven,' I was simply overjoyed, and found my own opinion confirmed where I least expected it. The *Bhagavad Gita* deepened the impression, and Tolstoy's 'The Kingdom of God is Within You' gave it permanent form."

Undoubtedly Count Tolstoy has profoundly influenced him. The old Russian reformer, in the simplicity of his life, the fearlessness of his utterances, and the nature of his teaching on war and work, has found a warm-hearted disciple in Mr. Gandhi. I think, too, very probably, the Count's representation of the Christian Church

has had its weight with him, and his own experience of Christian Churches has not been sufficiently happy to withstand it. But Tolstoy's teaching on some questions, notably on governments, has not won his assent. Ruskin and Thoreau have both had some share in forming his opinions, Ruskin's *Crown of Wild Olive* being an especial favourite. Last, but not least, the Passive Resistance Movement in England with regard to education has proved an object lesson, not only to him but to his people, of singular force and interest.

Some months ago, a prize was offered by *Indian Opinion* to competitors in South Africa for the best essay on "The Ethics of Passive Resistance." I was invited to act as judge. What surprised me most of all in the essays by Indians was the familiarity which the essayists showed with the education controversy in England. Dr. Clifford's name was as familiar to them as to me.

But, as may be imagined from the seed-thought planted by the Gujarati verse in Mr. Gandhi's mind, his ideal is not so much to resist evil passively; it has its active complement—to do good in reply to evil. "I do not like the term 'passive resistance,' " he said, "it fails to convey all I mean. It describes a method, but gives no hint of the system of which it is only part. Real beauty, and that is my aim, is in doing good against evil. Still, I adopt the phrase because it is well known, and easily understood, and because, at present, the great majority of my people can only grasp that idea. To me, the ideas which underlie the Gujarati hymn and the 'Sermon on the Mount' should revolutionise the whole of life."

"How did you begin this movement among your people ?" I asked. "Well," he replied, "some years ago,

when I began to take an active part in the public life of Natal, the adoption of this method occurred to me as the best course to pursue, should petitions fail, but, in the then unorganised condition of our Indian community, the attempt seemed useless. Here, however, in Johannesburg, when the Asiatic Registration Act was introduced, the Indian community was so deeply stirred, and so knit together in a common determination to resist it, that the moment seemed opportune. Some action they would take; it seemed to be best for the Colony, and altogether right, that their action should not take a riotous form, but that of passive resistance. They had no vote in Parliament, no hope of obtaining redress, no one would listen to their complaints. The Christian churches were indifferent, so I proposed this pathway of suffering, and after much discussion, it was adopted. In September, 1906, there was a large gathering of Indians in the old Empire Theatre, when the position was thoroughly faced, and, under the inspiration of deep feeling, and on the proposal of one of our leading men, they swore a solemn oath committing themselves to passive resistance."

Since then, this course has been bitterly attacked by many politicians, chiefly because they imagine that it places a new weapon in the hands of the natives. Mr. Gandhi has frequently replied to this. His arguments, briefly, are these :

(1) If the natives in any crisis adopt this method of meeting what they believe to be injustice, rather than resort to force, we ought to be devoutly thankful. It would mean that the gun and the assegai would give place to peaceful tactics. Men who see far believe that the problems which are connected with the natives will be the problems of the future, and that, doubtless, the white man will have a stern struggle to maintain his

ascendency in South Africa. When the moment of collision comes, if, instead of the old ways of massacre, assegai, and fire, the natives adopt the policy of passive resistance, it will be a grand change for the Colony.

(2) Passive resistance can only be carried to a successful conclusion, if the cause be just. The acceptance of suffering, instead of the infliction of it, requires such moral power in those who adopt this policy, that no community could successfully use it in an unjust cause. Injustice and passive resistance have no affinity.

(3) When the native peoples have risen sufficiently high in the scale of civilisation to give up savage warfare and use the Christian method of settling a dispute, they will be fit to exercise the right to vote in political affairs. This will be the great solution of questions connected with passive resistance. The one triumphant way of meeting all such combinations is to deal justly with the natives, and to give them, directly or indirectly, a voice in the settlement of those questions which concern their welfare.

(4) True passive resistance never tends to become active resistance. It recoils, of necessity, from the methods of violence or those advocated by anarchists. It is at the opposite pole from the spirit of war. If, then, the natives accept the doctrines which are now so prevalent amongst the Indian community, South Africa need not fear the horrors of a racial uprising. It need not look forward to the necessity of maintaining an army to keep the natives in awe. Its future will be much brighter than its past has been.

These are arguments which the Indian leader uses whenever the great question is discussed. "Passive resistance," he says, "has come to stay; well, thank God for that—it is the herald of peace."

Those who ponder these things think that they can see, with the Indian Dreamer, a brighter day dawning across the veld. Why should not the sword be turned into the ploughshare, and the spear into the pruning-hook ? Why should not men learn war no more ? And who can tell but that this long-drawn Indian agony may be the beginning of that experience of profound peace.

In view of the unrest at present so apparent in India, I invited him to send a message through these pages to the young men of his native land. His reply in writing lies before me :

"I am not sure that I have any right to send a message to those with whom I have never come into personal contact, but it has been desired and I consent. These, then, are my thoughts :

The struggle in the Transvaal is not without its interest for India. We are engaged in raising men who will give a good account of themselves in any part of the world. We have undertaken the struggle on the following assumptions :

(1) Passive resistance is always infinitely superior to physical force.

(2) There is no inherent barrier between Europeans and Indians anywhere.

(3) Whatever may have been the motives of the rulers in India, there is a desire on the part of the Nation at large to see that justice is done. It would be a calamity to break the connection between the British people and the people of India. If we are treated as, or assert our right to be treated as, free men, whether in India or elsewhere, the connection between the British people and the people of India cannot only be mutually beneficial, but is cal-

culated to be of enormous advantage to the world religiously, and, therefore, socially and politically. In my opinion, each Nation is the complement of the other.

Passive resistance in connection with the Transvaal struggle I should hold justifiable on the strength of any of these propositions. It may be a slow remedy, but I regard it as an absolutely sure remedy, not only for our ills in the Transvaal, but for all the political and other troubles from which our people suffer in India."

CHAPTER XXII

RELIGIOUS VIEWS

Mr. Gandhi's religious views, and his place in the theological world, have naturally been a subject of much discussion here. A few days ago I was told that "he is a Buddhist." Not long since, a newspaper described him as "a Christian Mohammedan," an extraordinary mixture indeed. Others imagine that he worships idols, and would be quite prepared to find a shrine in his office, or discover the trunk of "Gunputty" projecting from among his books. Not a few believed him to be a Theosophist. I question whether any system of religion can absolutely hold him. His views are too closely allied to Christianity to be entirely Hindu; and too deeply saturated with Hinduism to be called Christian, while his sympathies are so wide and catholic that one would imagine "he has reached a point where the formulae of sects are meaningless."

One night, when the house was still, we argued out the matter into the morning, and these are the results.

His conviction is that old Hinduism, the Hinduism of the earliest records, was a pure faith, free from idolatry; that the spiritual faith of India has been corrupted by materialism, and because of this she has lost her place in the van of the nations; that, through the ages, God, pervading all, has manifested Himself in different forms, becoming incarnate for purposes of salvation, with the object of leading men back into the right path. The *Gita* makes Krishna say :

> "When religion decays and when irreligion prevails, then I manifest myself. For the protection of

the good, for the destruction of the evil, for the firm establishment of the *dharma* I am born again and again."

"But," said I, "has Christianity any essential place in your theology?" "It is part of it," he said, "Jesus Christ is a right revelation of God." "But not the unique revelation that he is to me," I replied. "Not in the sense you mean," he said frankly, "I cannot set him on a solitary throne, because I believe God has been incarnate again and again."

To him, religion is an intensely practical thing. It underlies all action. The argument so frequently used against the Passive Resistance Campaign that "it is simply a political affair, with moral elements in it, but having no relation to religion," is to him a contradiction in terms. Politics, morals, commerce, all that has to do with conscience must be religion.

Naturally, his imagination is profoundly stirred by the "Sermon on the Mount," and the idea of self-renunciation pictured there as well as in the *Bhagavad Gita* and *The Light of Asia* win his complete assent. Self-mastery, self-denial, self-surrender, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, are, in his conception of life, stepping-stones to the ultimate goal of all—the goal of Buddha, the goal, as he interprets it, of John the Evangelist—absolute absorption of redeemed Man in God.

I question whether any religious creed would be large enough to express his views, or any Church system ample enough to shut him in. Jew and Christian, Hindu, Mohammedan, Parsi, Buddhist, and Confucian, all have their places in his heart, as children of the same Father. "Are you, then, a Theosophist?" I asked. "No," he said emphatically, "I am not a Theosophist. There is much in Theosophy that attracts me, but I have

never been able to subscribe to the creed of Theosophists."

This breadth of sympathy is, indeed, one note of the Passive Resistance Movement. It has bound together all sections of the Indian community. It would be impossible to determine which religious section has done most for its interests. Mr. Cachalia, Mr. Dawad Mahomed, and Mr. Bawazeer are followers of Islam; Mr. Parsee Rustomjee and Mr. Sorabji are Zoroastrians, Mr. G. P. Vyas and Mr. Thambi Naidoo are Hindu leaders. All have suffered imprisonment, and all have rendered unstinted service, while common suffering has drawn these and other helpers into a brotherhood of sympathy in which differences of creed are forgotten.

An incident of last August will illustrate this statement. When "the old offender," Mr. Thambi Naidoo, the Tamil leader, was sent to prison for the third time, to do "hard labour" for a fortnight, Mr. Gandhi suggested that we should visit the sick wife together. I assented gladly. On our way we were joined by the Moulvie and the Imam of the Mosque, together with a Jewish gentleman. It was curious assembly which gathered to comfort the little Hindu woman in her home —two Mohammedans, a Hindu, a Jew, and a Christian. And there she stood, her eldest boy supporting her, and the tears trickling between her fingers. She was within a few days of the sufferings of motherhood. After we had bent together in prayer, the Moulvie spoke a few words of comfort in Urdu, and we each followed, saying what we could in our own way to give her cheer. It was one of the many glimpses which we have lately had of that divine love which mocks at boundaries of creed and limits of race or colour. It was a vision of Mr. Gandhi's ideal.

Owing chiefly to his sense of the sacredness of life and of his views of health, vegetarianism is with him a religious principle. The battle was fought out in childhood under his mother's influence. But since that time, abstinence from all animal food has become a matter of strong conviction with him, and he preaches it zealously. When, in these Transvaal prisons, the authorities persisted in cooking the crushed mealies of the prisoners in animal fat, his followers preferred to starve rather than touch it.

It is also part of his creed to live simply. He believes that all luxury is wrong. He teaches that a great deal of sickness, and most of the sins of our day, may be traced to this source. To hold in the flesh with a strong hand, to crucify it, to bring the needs of his own life, Thoreau- and Tolstoy-like, within the narrowest limits, are positive delights to him, only to be rivalled by the joy of guiding other lives into the same path.

I write this in the house in which he usually lives when in Johannesburg. Yonder is the open stoep—there is the rolled-up mattress on which he sleeps. It would be difficult to imagine a life less open to the assaults of pride or sloth than the life lived here. Everything that can minister to the flesh is abjured. Of all men, Mr. Gandhi reminds one of "Purun Daas," of whom Kipling writes : "He had used his wealth and his power for what he knew both to be worth; he had taken honour when it came in his way; he had seen men and cities far and near, and men and cities had stood up and honoured him. Now he would let these things go, as a man drops the cloak he needs no longer." This is a graphic picture of our friend. He simply does what he believes to be his duty, accepts every experience that ensues with calmness, takes honour if it comes, with-

out pride; and then, "lets it go as a man drops the cloak he needs no longer," should duty bring dishonour. In the position of "Purun Bhagat," he would do easily what the Bhagat did, and no one, even now, would be surprised to see him go forth at some call which no one else can hear, his crutch under his arm, his begging bowl in his hand, an antelope skin flung around him, and a smile of deep content on his lips.

"That man alone is wise.
Who keeps the mastery of himself."

Mr. Gandhi is not a Christian in any orthodox sense. Perhaps orthodox Christianity has itself to blame for this. There is little inducement in these Colonies for an Indian to recognise the loveliness of Christ under the disguise in which Christianity clothes her Lord. What interest has the Christian Church in Johannesburg shown in these thousands from India and China, who for years have been resident in our midst? Practically none. Are they encouraged to believe that they, too, are souls for whom Christ died? By no means. Here and there individual efforts have been made, and some few Indians attend Christian places of worship, but for the most part, they have been left severely alone, while the few men, who have tried to show that there is still a heart of love in the Church of Christ, and have dared to speak a word on behalf of a suffering people, have been subjected to all manner of abuse, and have been made to suffer with them. It is this discrepancy between a beautiful creed and our treatment of the Indian at the doors, which repels the man who thinks.

We have failed, too, I believe, to realise the inwardness of this Passive Resistance Movement; and the apparent indifference of the Churches has been deeply felt by these men. In reality, it is not a trade dispute, nor

is it a political move; these are incidents of the struggle. It is a sign of the awakening of the Asiatics to a sense of their manhood, the token that they do not mean to play a servile or degraded part in our society; it is their claim, put forward in suffering, to be treated by Christians in a Christian way. This is the wonderful vision which Government and Churches alike have failed to see.

Meanwhile, although, to my thinking, the seeker has not yet reached the goal, that wonderful experience of Christ which is the glory of the Christian faith, enriching the wealthiest life, and giving new power to the strong, I cannot forget what the Master himself said : "Not everyone who saith unto me, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven."

POSTSCRIPT

October 16th, 1908.

Yesterday, Mr. Gandhi was sentenced, for the second time this year, to imprisonment for two months. "Hard labour" was also imposed. His crime was that, in returning from Natal, he was unable to show his certificate, which everyone knew had been issued to him, but which he had burned with the rest, when the terms of the compromise were repudiated by the Government; and refused to give his thumb impressions, as means of identification—a needless formality—and which would have meant acquiesence in the present Act.

His consistent line of conduct, through all this trouble, has been to stand beside the humblest of his countrymen and suffer with them. In fact, all the Asiatic leaders have done this. A few weeks ago when the hawkers were arrested for having no licence, the best educated and wealthiest men in the community suddenly became "hawkers." The Imam of the Mosque, the Chairman of the British Indian Association, the Chairman of the Chinese Association, and others like them, appeared in the streets with baskets of fruit or vegetables, or bundles of soft goods, and invited the police officers and magistrates to buy. It was an act of kinship which was appreciated by the suffering men. Now, a private telegram from Volksrust states that "Mr. Gandhi has been drafted on to work on Volksrust Show Ground, attired in the usual prison garb."

When passing sentence on him, the magistrate is reported to have said : "I very much regret to see Mr. Gandhi, an officer of this Court and of the Supreme

Court, in his present position. Mr. Gandhi may feel otherwise, looking at the situation in the light that he is suffering for his country. But I can only view it from another point of view."

The prisoner himself made it perfectly clear how he regarded it. In addressing the Court he said : "In connection with my refusal to produce my registration certificate, and to give thumb-impressions or finger-impressions, I think that as an officer of this Court, and of the Supreme Court, I owe an explanation. There have been differences between the Government and the British Indians whom I represent as Secretary of the British Indian Association, over the Asiatic Act No. 2 of 1907, and after due deliberation, I took upon myself the responsibility of advising my countrymen not to submit to the primary obligation imposed by the Act, but still, as law-abiding subjects of the State, to accept its sanctions. Rightly or wrongly, in common with other Asiatics, I consider that the Act in question, among other things; offends our conscience and the only way I thought, as I still think, the Asiatics could show their feeling with regard to it was to incur its penalties. And, in pursuance of that policy, I admit that I have advised the accused, who have preceded me, to refuse submission to the Act, as also the Act 36 of 1908, seeing that, in the opinion of British Indians, full relief that was promised by the Government has not been granted. I am now before the Court to suffer the penalties that may be awarded to me."

Just prior to this he wrote to me on a scrap of paper : "My sole trust is in God, I am therefore quite cheerful."

So once more, in company with about two hundred and fifty of his people, scattered throughout the Tran-

vaal gaols, Mr. Gandhi is condemned, as he put it in a note recently, "to partake of the hospitality of King Edward's Hotel." Cheerful? Naturally so; according to his own words, "the happiest man in the Transvaal."

"He hath obtained the Yog—that man is such.
In sorrows not dejected, and in joys
Not overjoyed; dwelling outside the stress
Of passion, fear, and anger."

October 27th.

On Sunday, Mr. Gandhi was transferred from Volksrust gaol to the Fort, at Johannesburg.

The Indians, who have become expert "pickets," always alert, gained intelligence of this change, and planted men at every station along the line of route. When he reached Johannesburg, dressed in convict clothes, marked all over with the broad arrow, he was marched under guard through the streets, before sundown, carrying his bundles as any convict would.

It makes one ashamed of the British rule under which such insults are possible. Of course, it is simply a result of the prison system. The governors of these gaols are gentlemanly and courteous, the warders, with one exception, have been most kind, but an Indian is classed as a Native, and a Passive Resister as a criminal, while a criminal native must suffer the utmost degradation that the law provides. So the batteries of the Reef crush criminal savage and conscientious Indian without distinction. We have heard that Mr. Gandhi's experiences during that night were extremely shocking. Again the cast-iron regulations were at fault. As a native prisoner of the criminal class, he looked into a cell with native and Chinese convicts, men more degraded than it is easy to imagine accustomed to vices which cannot be named.

This refined Indian gentleman was obliged to keep himself awake all night to resist possible assaults upon himself such as he saw perpetrated around him. That night can never be forgotten.

October 28th.

Once more we have seen him. The Crown required Mr. Gandhi yesterday and today at the Court as a witness in some trial, and we saw and spoke to him. He looks thin and unkempt. The wretched food and his gaol experiences have told sensibly on his health. But his soul is calm and his mind clear. "It is all," he said in his quick incisive way.

Two children, greatly attached to him, accompanied their friend on his return march to the Fort. They walked in line with him, for a long distance up the dusty road, in hope of attracting his attention, and of throwing him a word of cheer. But they failed. His face was "stead-fastly set to go to Jerusalem," and he saw nothing but that.

I wonder what he saw in that long march. Not the immediate Jerusalem, I imagine—the place of crucifixion. I know of no vision more terrible than that. The Fort, with its cells and its hateful associations. These long files of prisoners. The white-clad, brutal native warders, swaggering along with their naked assegais. The lash for the obdurate, and the criminal taint for all. A city whose secrets may not be told; from whose dens children emerge criminals, and criminals infinitely worse than when they entered.

No, not that; it is another Jerusalem which he faces steadfastly. It is such a city as all inspired men see, and to build whose walls they still "endure the cross, despising shame." A holy city, already come down from God

out of Heaven, forming; unrecognised, unseen by worldly souls, amid the squalor of today, wherever God's children are. A new Jerusalem, whose beautiful gates are ever open to all nations; where no "colour-bar" is permitted to challenge the Indian, and no racial prejudice to daunt the Chinese; into whose walls even an Asiatic may build those precious stones which, one day, will startle us with their glory.

OTHER BOOKS ON MAHATMA GANDHI

1. MAHATMA, Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, by D. G. Tendulkar (8 volumes)

2. MAHATMA GANDHI AS A STUDENT, by J. M. Upadhyaya

3. COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI (22 volumes, 1884 to March 1922)

4. SAMPOORNA GANDHI VANGMAYA (Hindi) (17 volumes, 1884 to June 1920)

5. GANDHI IN CHAMPARAN, by D. G. Tendulkar

6. THE GANDHI STORY, a pictorial presentation for children.

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